

**NEWS & KNOWLEDGE...
NEWS YOU CAN USE...
September, 2023**

HAPPY FALL!

**Labor Day is on Monday, September 4, 2023.
Happy Labor Day!**



CONNECTIONS OUTINGS FOR SEPTEMBER, 2023

THURSDAY OUTINGS:

09/07/2023-Walmart Shopping
09/14/2023-Bowling at the Pin Station
09/21/2023-Dollar Tree Shopping and
McDonald's for Milkshakes/
Employment and Education Dinner
09/28/2023-Bingo, Baby!, at the Clubhouse

SATURDAY OUTINGS:

09/09/2023-Catawba Valley Healthcare
(CVH) 5-K Run/Walk-Cancelled due
to Severe Weather.
09/30/2023-Tour Riverbend Creamery
and Getting Ice Cream



The History of Labor Day:
(From: www.history.com):

This year, Labor Day takes place on Monday, September 4, 2023. Labor Day honors the contributions and achievements of American workers. Labor Day is observed on the first Monday of September. The labor movement created the holiday in the late 19th century. In 1894, it became a federal holiday. The Labor Day weekend serves as the end of summer and the start of the back-to-school season for many Americans, who celebrate it with parties, street parades, and athletic events. Labor Day originated from a dismal chapter of American labor history. In the late 1800s, the average American worked 12-hour days and seven-day weeks in order to make a basic living. In spite of state restrictions, children as young as 5 and/or 6 years old worked in mills, factories, and mines across the United States, while earning a fraction of what their adult counterparts did. People of all ages, particularly poor people and recent immigrants, often dealt with very unsafe working conditions, along with inadequate access to fresh air, sanitary facilities, and breaks. Manufacturing increasingly overtook agriculture as the wellspring of American employment and labor unions, which had formed in the late 18th century, grew more vocal and more prominent. They started organizing strikes and rallies to protest poor working conditions and to encourage employers to renegotiate working hours and pay for workers. During this period, many of the strikes and rallies became violent, such as the Haymarket Riot of 1886, which resulted in the deaths of several Chicago police officers and several workers. Some of these events also created longstanding traditions, such as the first Labor Day parade, which took place on September 5, 1882, when 10,000 workers took off unpaid time to march from City Hall to Union Square in New York City, New York. The idea of a, “workingmen’s holiday,” celebrated on the first Monday of September, spread to other industrial centers in the United States and many states passed legislation that recognized the, “workingmen’s holiday.” Congress did not legalize the holiday until 1894, when an event in American labor history took place that brought workers’ rights to the attention of the American public. On May 11, 1894, employees of the Pullman Palace Car Company in Chicago, Illinois went on strike to protest wage cuts and the firing of union representatives. On June 26, 1894, the American Railroad Union, led by Eugene V. Debs, called for a boycott of all Pullman railway cars, which crippled railroad traffic across the United States. In order to break the Pullman railway car strike, the federal government sent troops to Chicago, which resulted in a wave of riots that resulted in the death of more than a dozen workers. Later in 1894, Congress passed an act to make Labor Day a legal holiday in the District of Columbia and the American territories, as a result of all of the unrest of American workers. Congress also wanted to repair ties with American workers as well. On June 28, 1894, President Grover Cleveland signed the Labor Day holiday into law. No one has identified the true founder of Labor Day. Many people give credit to Peter J. McGuire, cofounder of the American Federation of Labor for establishing Labor Day. Other people think that Matthew Maguire, a secretary of the Central Labor Union, first proposed the holiday. In cities and towns across the United States, people celebrate Labor Day with parades, picnic, barbecues and firework displays.

Beverly Bryan is Retiring!

In case you have not already heard the news, Beverly Bryan is retiring from Connections on Friday, September 8, 2023 after 30-plus years of dedicated service to the Clubhouse. We will really miss Beverly, but she wants time to do things she wishes, such as taking art classes and establishing her own chicken farm. There will be a retirement party on September 8, 2023. The time of the party and other details are to be determined. She also will be working at Connections on as needed basis. Beverly, have a happy and productive retirement and please keep in touch with the folks at the Clubhouse!

Update on Transitional Employment (TE) Positions:

Recently, staff went to the Four Peas in a Pod Restaurant and they discussed with the owner the possibility of having TE positions there. The TE positions at Four Peas in a Pod will start in September, 2023. Please remember to support and to visit businesses such as Four Peas in a Pod, who support Connections' efforts to place people in TE positions. The search for TE positions is ongoing. If you have any ideas for TE placements, please let Mitzi know!

Education News:

If anyone is interested in continuing his/her/their education and would like to take a tour to Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC), please meet with staff to organize a tour of CVCC. Also, CVCC holds monthly conversations called Popcorn Conversations, where popcorn is served. Students and some faculty attend these conversations. In the future, Connections will schedule a time for us to come to CVCC and hold a Popcorn Conversation about the Clubhouse program.

A Few Clean Jokes: (From: www.thoughtcatalog.com):

- Did you hear about the kidnapping in the park? They woke him up!
- I have a lot of jokes about unemployment, but none of them work.
- What do you call an explosive monkey? Baboom!
- That was a very emotional wedding. Even the cake was in tiers!
- A pessimist's blood type is B-negative.
- You can't trust a deli sandwich. They're full of bologna!
- What you get when 9 ants move in with their buddy? Tenants!

Clubhouse International Standards for Clubhouse Programs:

EMPLOYMENT:

21. The Clubhouse enables its members to return to paid work through Transitional Employment, Supported Employment and Independent Employment; therefore, the Clubhouse does not provide employment to members through in-house businesses, segregated Clubhouse enterprises or sheltered workshops.

Transitional Employment:

22. The Clubhouse offers its own Transitional Employment program, which provides as a right of membership, opportunities for members to work on job placements in the labor market. As a defining characteristic of a Clubhouse Transitional Employment program, the Clubhouse guarantees coverage on all placements during member absences. In addition, the Transitional Employment program meets the following basic criteria:
 - a. The desire to work is the single most important factor determining placement opportunity.
 - b. Placement opportunities will continue to be available, regardless of the level of success in previous placements.
 - c. Members work at the employer's place of business.
 - d. Members are paid the prevailing wage rate, but at least minimum wage, directly by the employer.
 - e. Transitional Employment placements are drawn from a wide variety of job opportunities.
 - f. Transitional Employment placements are part-time and time-limited, generally 12 to 2 hours per week and from six to nine months in duration.
 - g. Selection and training of members on Transitional Employment is the responsibility of the Clubhouse, not the employer.
 - h. Clubhouse members and staff prepare reports on TE placements for all appropriate agencies dealing with members' benefits.
 - i. Transitional Employment placements are managed by Clubhouse staff and members and not by TE specialists.
 - j. There are no TE placements within the Clubhouse, Transitional Employment placements at an auspice agency must be off site from the Clubhouse and meet all of the above criteria.

Supported and Independent Employment:

23. The Clubhouse offers its own Supported and Independent Employment Programs to assist members to secure, sustain, and better their employment. As a defining characteristic of Clubhouse Supported Employment, the Clubhouse maintains relationship with the working members and the employer. Members and staff in partnership determine the type, frequency and location of desired supports.
24. Members who are working independently continue to have available all Clubhouse supports and opportunities, as well as participation in evening and weekend programs.

Unusual September Holiday:
(From: www.timeanddate.com):

Monday, September 4, 2023-Eat an Extra Dessert Day.
Wednesday, September 6, 2023-Fight Procrastination Day.
Saturday, September 9, 2023-Teddy Bear Day.
Monday, September 11, 2023-Make Your Bed Day.
Tuesday, September 12, 2023-Chocolate Milkshake Day.
Saturday, September 16, 2023-National Cleanup Day.
Saturday, September 16, 2023-Guacamole Day.
Monday, September 18, 2023-Rice Krispie Treat Day.
Saturday, September 23, 2023-Checkers Day.
Monday, September 25, 2023-Comic Book Day.
Wednesday, September 27, 2023-Crush a Can Day.
Thursday, September 28, 2023-Ask a Stupid Question Day.



**NO ACT OF KINDNESS,
NO MATTER HOW SMALL,
IS EVER WASTED.**

— AESOP —



News from the Hickory Museum of Art!:

From Tuesday, September 5, 2023 to Tuesday, September 12, 2023; Gin Hurley will conduct a Raku Clay Workshop at the Hickory Museum of Art from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Participants will learn to hand-build a box and a pendant in the first session of the workshop. In the second session of the workshop, participants will work with an outdoor raku kiln and they will fire their pottery on-site! A metallic glaze will be used on the box. Participants will add horsehair to their pendants. The second session may last for up to two hours. The Hickory Museum of Art I is located at 243 3rd Avenue, NE, Hickory, North Carolina, 28601. The cost of the two session is \$45.00 for Hickory Museum of Art members and \$60.00 for non-members. For more information, please call the Hickory Museum of Art at (828) 327-8576.

Spotlight on Gin Hurley:

This information is taken from Gin's website, Tigersmoon Design Pottery. Since Gin left Connections in May, 2023, she has focused on her time and attention on her pottery business, Tigersmoon Design Pottery, in Taylorsville, North Carolina. She has always been attracted to art and creation. In high school, Gin had an introduction to ceramics, which led her to seek more knowledge about the medium. She managed a public studio and a ceramic shop when she was 16 years old in conjunction with her family. Gin learned much about firing and casting in this time, along with developing a strong understanding of small business ownership. She attended the University of North Carolina in Charlotte (UNC-C), North Carolina, where she focused on glaze and throwing in her academic program. In 2008, Gin graduated from UNC-Charlotte with a Bachelor of Arts in Ceramics, along with a minor in America Sign Language. Before her graduation, she received an invitation to teach ceramics at the local YMCA, where she often worked with underprivileged and special needs youth and with the Deaf Community. She went on to Salt Lake City, Utah, where she worked as art instructor for extended education programs and with special needs work activities, that gave her a chance to share her passion for art and teach art to students who may have missed out on an opportunity to it. Gin returned to North Carolina where she built her own personal studio, while working on community grants and teaching through community programs. She worked with many groups such as underprivileged youth and elderly people, sharing art and creativity. Gin has had jobs as both Events and Activities Director with senior citizens and the general public in in both teaching and non-profits. Over time, she grew as a potter, developing from functional ware to form and design based vessels. The process of creation went on to become fundamental in the design, as well as the visual aesthetic of a piece. Her struggles and use of juxtaposition involving control of surface and environment became a fundamental part of her work. Gin's view on her pottery is as follows: "Pottery has always an element of flame involved in the process. From the gas kiln to the pit fire to all are using heat and flame to make alchemy, by turning clay into stone. Taking this [these] wet materials, allowing it to be formed, molded, then hardened to the perfect amount before being polished and allowed to dry. I find meaning in the comparison of the, 'lifecycle,' of a pot as that with a person's being. We start as this malleable substance, all the materials are there, but needing to be shaped, and formed. With a bit of time and polish, it can become a lovely form, however until it has withstood a trial of pure pressure and struggle, it will remain fragile. Though, in the end, even the marks from the trials and tribulations are part of the beauty and give the piece a true character. I find even more joy when the surface is something is as simple as the polished clay with a natural item such as hair or [a] feather fused to its surface [a] high temperature. Nature remains in all its given components, yet becoming something it would not have achieved without the artist's hand."



The, “Piano Story”:

(This story was shared in the Clubhouse International Workshop Entitled, “Clubhouse Decision-Making: How, Who, Why,” at the 18th World Seminar in Denver, Colorado, on Wednesday, October 28, 2015 by Karen Christ, Member of the Genesis Club, in Worcester, Massachusetts):

I think I should give you a very brief background in order for you to understand why this little, “story,” may be a good example of how a Clubhouse reaches consensus on any issue. Music has always been extremely important to me. I began piano lessons when I was seven, and, later, I studied voice for five years at [the] New England Conservatory in Boston, [Massachusetts]. My mental illness, however, became increasingly severe through the years, and the Summer of 2004 was the beginning of a 10-year, “disconnect,” between me and my music. The severity of my Bipolar I Disorder precluded me from having any interest in a lot of things, including music. Fast forward to May, 2013. I had never heard of a, “Clubhouse,” before, and the last thing I expected to see during my initial tour of [the] Genesis Club was a baby grand piano in the Dining Room. Apparently, the piano had been donated to the club by a founding Board Member. I was surprised to discover that members could play the piano during part of the lunch hour. After I had been a member of [the] Genesis Club for a while, with great trepidation, I began playing the piano from time to time for a few minutes during lunch. Soon, thereafter, the piano started coming up in our regularly scheduled Policy Meetings. The Kitchen Unit had no work space, as the other units did, to do administrative and clerical tasks during the work-ordered day. Members and staff suggested that the piano be removed from the club so [that] they could appropriate that space as a permanent work place to successfully and efficiently complete their tasks during the day. I was, initially, rather upset about the possibility of losing that piano; in the beginning, even Kevin Bradley, our Executive Director, didn't want to see the piano go, as it had a long history. But the concept of, “Policy Meeting,” was new to me. *Everyone*, members and staff alike, had the opportunity to speak to the piano issue during the meeting. I could express my own concerns-Even though I was the last, “Hold out,” who wanted to keep the piano. It was amazing to me to discover that my opinion was just as important as that of our Director concerning matters that affected, “My Clubhouse.” After listening to others’ opinions and concerns during Policy Meetings, I came to realize that it was only right and equitable that the Kitchen Unit have a work space of their own, so they [could] complete the various tasks necessary during the work-ordered day. Someone had the brilliant idea of moving the piano to our Guest House (Where colleagues stay when they come to Genesis for training). And so we reached a consensus: The Kitchen Unit got the space they needed, and the piano was not discarded, but was simply moved to our Guest House. That was a decision [that] I-And everyone else -could live with. **That** was a true consensus. Two things resulted from this experience: After years of struggling-Feeling like a failure, feeling useless, feeling like I didn't matter and that my life was a waste-I found that my opinion **did** matter, that what I said or did **was** important and counted for something-And I found that people still enjoyed my music!

Due to being surprised by that wonderful piano, the process of our Policy Meetings, and the consensus reached, I gained some needed confidence and [I] began moving toward recovery and, also, re-connecting with a part of my life that I thought I had lost; slowly, but steadily, music has come back into my life. I am working independently on a permanent part-time job, as well as attending the club-And I am also singing and playing the piano!

It is hard to believe that Christmas is coming fast! Our annual pottery fundraiser is just around the corner on Saturday, December 9th. Come and visit with a special North Pole guest, Santa Claus! Get your photo made with Santa while picking up some holiday gifts for loved ones. We will also have Bam's Sandwich Bistro for your food needs!



Save the Date!

Connections Clubhouse Annual Pottery Fundraiser
Date: Saturday, December 9th, 2023
Location: Connections Mud Shack
Time: 10:00am - 2:00pm

Get this wonderful winter event on your calendar now so you won't miss out! Take home beautiful pottery gifts for your family and friends!



SAVE THE DATE: 09/29/2023:

Are you a student enrolled in CVCC's Human Services program?:

Are you a local Human Services professional?:

This event will connect students, agencies, and providers to address the unmet services needs within our community. Upon completion of the conference, participants will earn 4 CEUs, NBCC approved. Providers interested in being part of a lunch hour resource fair for students and other providers, please contact Savaan Lombardi at slombardi621@cvcc.edu. For more information, please contact David Zealy-Wright, LCMHC, LCAS, CCS at dzealy@ccvc.edu/828-327-7000, extension 4013. There is a \$10.00 Registration Fee. To register, please log into at <https://ss-prod-cloud.cvcc.edu/student/InstantEnrollment> and enter, "Connections," in the Keyword search bar. **CVCC is located on 2550 US Highway 70, SE, Hickory, NC, 28602. The CVCC website is www.cvcc.edu.**

An in-depth exploration of the needs of our human services populations and providers in the community. The learning objectives will be to increase awareness and competency with marginalized populations, as well as to improve awareness and competency with their mental health needs. In addition, one of the primary objectives of the conference is to, "connect," students, agencies and providers together around addressing the unmet human services needs in our community.

SPEAKERS:

David Zealy-Wright, LCMHC, LCAS, CCS: David is a licensed clinical mental health counselor and a licensed clinical addiction specialist with over ten years of direct training and experience in substance abuse disorders and servicing mental health needs.

Carmen Givens, MSW, LCSW: Carmen has extensive experience over the past decade working with both gerontological and substance abuse populations.

Heather Smith, MA, NCC, LCMHC-A, LCA-A: Heather has two years of experience working in private practice with children's issues, as well as several years prior working in substance abuse setting with parents in addiction and their challenges.

Michelle Stroebel, MA, NCC, LCMHC, DBH-C: Michelle is the Education Chair Members for Charlotte Trans Health with several years of experience working with trans young persons.

Michelle Mathis: Michelle is the founder of Olive Branch Ministries, a ministry focused on providing harm reduction services for opiate use disorders and other substance use disorders in our community. Michelle has also served on the board of directors for the NC Harm Reduction Coalition for several years and is considered an expert in the state on the topic of harm reduction.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS:

Addressing the Methamphetamine Epidemic:

Content: Description of stimulant use disorders, how methamphetamine behaves in the body and the brain, how it is directly impacting our community and ways to address this impact.

Learning Objectives: Increase knowledge in the area of stimulant use disorders and the surrounding communities struggling with them.

Best Practices for Transgender Youth in Mental Health:

Content: An overview of the needs and best practices for trans young people's mental and physical health.

Learning Objectives: Improve the knowledge of our community providers to improve the overall experience of this marginalized population in our community.

Best Practices for Children in Mental Health:

Content: An overview of general therapy needs for childhood mental health challenges, as well as current area trends.

Learning Objectives: Improve the skills of providers that primarily work with children, as well as highlight current trends and needs for children in the 21st century.

Mental Health of an Aging Population:

Content: Mental health needs for an aging population, as well as current trends in our region.

Learning Objectives: Improve knowledge about needs for aging populations, as well as understand current trends with seniors in our community.

The Opiate Epidemic in Catawba County:

Content: Harm reduction strategies in for community mental health providers, as well as current trends in homelessness and intravenous drug use.

Learning Objective: Improve knowledge about the amount of intravenous drug use in our community and the impact. Provide tools for providers to better assist those struggling with these issues.

Catawba County Community College Human Services Connection Conference has been approved by NBCC for NBCC credit. Catawba County Community College is solely responsible for all aspects of the program. NBCC Approval No.: SP-4278.

The Business Brief:

Western Piedmont Workforce Development

Labor Market Newsletter-August, 2023:

Regional Market Labor Overview: The regional economy continues to be fluid with the June, 2023 report. The unemployment rate increased 0.2 percent to 3.5 percent for the region for the May, 2023 Report. The number of job openings continues to be high, with over 8,500 jobs. Visit the Western Piedmont Workforce website at: www.westernpiedmontworks.org for interactive labor market information.

Western Piedmont WDB-June, 2023 Data

Monthly Trends:

(Data is from NC Department of Commerce. Labor and Economic Analysis, 919-707-1500, lead@nccommerce.com):

Unemployed Individuals: 6,109 (In North Carolina):

Unemployment Rate: 3.5% (June, 2023) and 3.3% (May, 2023):

Unemployment Rate in the United States: 3.6%

Employed Individuals: 170, 424 (Labor Force: 176,533)

Employment Change from May, 2023: -656 (Decrease from May, 2023):

Employment Change from One Year Ago: 919

Hickory Metro Jobs: 159,200 (-400 Change in Jobs from May, 2023).

TAXABLE RETAILS SALES: \$500, 101,494 (3.5% Change from One Year Ago).

JOB OPENINGS: 8,559 (Decrease of -45 from May, 2023):

WHO'S HIRING:

- Catawba Valley Medical Center-267
- UNC Health Care System-141
- UNC Health Blue Ridge-114
- Food Lion-99
- Frye Regional Medical Center-98
- Burger King Corporation-96
- Walmart Inc.-93
- CVS Health-51

WHAT JOBS:

- Registered Nurses-317
- Retail Salespersons-123
- Physicians, All Other-88
- First-Line Supervisors of Food Prep and Servers-82
- Fast Food and Counter Workers-76
- Licensed Practical and Vocational Nurses-54
- Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand-52
- Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids-48

THE STATE OF HIRING IN THE FIFTH DISTRICT-By: Zach Edwards:

The past two years have been marked by a historically tight labor market, in which many firms have had difficulty hiring and retaining workers who possess the necessary skill sets. In a recent post, we explored evidence from our business surveys that suggests that the labor market may be cooling somewhat. Our employment and availability of skill indexes have returned to pre-pandemic levels, and our estimates of wage growth have come down from their 2022 peak. Nonetheless, wage growth estimates remain above pre-pandemic levels, and data from our August surveys suggests that many firms are still having trouble hiring and retaining workers with the desired skills. This is especially true among the manufacturing firms, which continue to have a harder time hiring workers with the necessary skills sets than their service-sector counterparts.

Economic Indicators Newsletter (EIN):

The latest Economic Indicators Newsletter (EIN) addresses the Hickory Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) unemployment rates; Per Capita Personal Income, Hickory MSA job market information, Hickory MSA multi-family residential building permits trends, and Hickory MS gross domestic product. The EIN is a quarterly publication of the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board publication,. To subscribe or view past editions, go to: <https://www.wpcog.org/economic-indicators-newsletter>, or contact Taylor Dellinger, Senior Data Analyst, at 828-485-4233 or email at: taylor.dellinger@wpcog.org.

NCWORKS BUSINESS SERVICES:

- Applicant Screening
- Interview Spaces
- Labor Market Information
- Job Orders Assistance
- Job Promotion
- NEXTGEN Paid Internship
- Recruitment Events
- Federal Bonding and Tax Credit Information.
- Employee Training Grant

**Western Piedmont Council of Governments
Workforce Development Board:**

www.westernpiedmontworks.org (A proud member of the American JobCenter network)

The NCWorks Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. Auxiliary aids or services for individuals with disabilities are available on request.

Social Media: www.facebook.com/westernpiedmontworks
www.twitter.com/WPWorkforceDev
www.youtube.com/channel/UCsZ5inndfEREtMmELO5yPQA

Don't let
THE SILLY LITTLE THINGS STEAL
YOUR HAPPINESS.