

WATCH News

Volume 24

December 2022 - November 2024

NEWSLETTER AND FUNDRAISING LETTER UPDATES

As most of you are aware, in 2023 we decided to send out a fundraising letter instead of our annual newsletter. We made this decision due to the increasing cost of having the newsletter printed. After reducing the size of our list, we were still spending approximately \$2,000.00 on printing, with this cost rising each year. In addition, postage rates are continuing to rise, which added further expense to sending out newsletters. We were successful with the fundraising letters as far as receiving approximately the same amount of donations, but a few people voiced disappointment that they were no longer receiving a newsletter. In order to keep costs down, and ensure families and providers are up to date with important news and information, we have decided to continue to send out the annual fundraising letter to the general public, and share an annual newsletter with families and providers. This edition will start where the last newsletter left off, December 2022.

You can also keep up with news and events as they happen by adding us on Facebook. We are listed under **Murray Watch**.

WATCH, INC. CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

This year we are celebrating our Ruby Anniversary, commemorating 40 years of service in the community! WATCH opened its adult day program on May 2, 1984, and dedicated the facility on October 28, 1984. A ribbon cutting was held on June 24, with the Murray-Calloway County Chamber of Commerce.

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WATCH STAFF AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We have had several staff and board changes since the last newsletter in 2022. Current staff includes Regina Slaughter, *Executive Director*; Patrice Klobe, *Executive Financial Director*; Ruby Weathers, *Administrative Assistant*; Samantha Wisehart, *Program Manager*; Donna Dick, *Activities Coordinator*; Kirby Ford, *Floor Supervisor*; and *DSPs (Direct Service Providers)* Justin Ford, Ava Leslie, Vickie Leslie, and Jasmin Burns. Peggy Williams continues in the role of *Executive Advisor*.

After the passing of board Chair Ava Watkins in March of this year, Sharon Hart assumed the position of *Chair*. *Vice Chair* is Leah Hart, and *Secretary/Treasurer* is Gayle Balentine. We welcomed new board members Jason Billington and Debbie Ferguson. Remaining board members are John Dale, Sue McNeary Dennis, Georgianna Moffitt, Shawn Reynolds, Judy Tidwell and Lynn Wuest.

KENTUCKY COLONEL GRANTS

In 2023, we received an \$11,319.00 grant award from the Kentucky Colonels. These funds plus \$4,623.00 paid by WATCH were allocated to replace the wooden deck connecting the office building annex and gym with composite decking. The project was completed in September of 2023. In 2024, we received a \$5,450.00 grant award from the Kentucky Colonels. These funds plus an additional \$5,550.00 paid by WATCH were allocated to install a solar powered barrier gate at the end of our north driveway that connects to Olive St. The installation was completed in August, 2024. We felt the barrier was necessary for the safety of our participants and visitors, due to the increase of cut-through traffic between Main St. and Olive St.

VAN GRANT

After three years of grant applications through the section 5310, Kentucky Department of Transportation, WATCH was able to secure a 2019 Dodge Grand Caravan, low floor minivan with rear loading wheelchair ramp in August of 2023. We are able to transport three passengers and one person in a wheelchair or two persons in wheelchairs and one passenger plus the driver safely and efficiently. The purchase was possible with 80% federal funds and 20% local funds. Stacey Courtney, Director of Physical Planning at the PADD office, assisted us throughout the grant process.

TEAM KENTUCKY NONPROFIT ASSISTANCE FUND

We were fortunate to receive an award from the Team Kentucky Nonprofit Assistance Fund in December of 2022. This came at a time when concerns were growing about our financial status and the ability to continue providing quality services to those we serve. We are extremely grateful to have been a recipient of Team Kentucky funding that enabled us to breathe easier and feel like we were getting back to solid ground after the setbacks we experienced throughout the COVID Public Health Emergency. The funding received enabled us to continue to provide vital services to assist adults with developmental/intellectual disabilities, as well as acquired brain injuries, in becoming an integral part of their community and providing them with opportunities to become more independent and self-sufficient.

DONATIONS

We are thankful for each monetary donation, as well as donations of goods, time and talent from so many people in the community. Tim and Rhonda Williams have continued to contribute each year to help with providing meals and refreshments for our Thanksgiving lunch and annual Christmas Party.

In April of 2023, it was necessary to remove the two trees that had deteriorated on the west side of the workshop building. Once the trees were removed, we decided to build a deck to serve as an outdoor gathering space for participants. After we purchased materials, volunteers from Hope in Murray generously offered their time and expertise to complete the deck construction in June.

In May of 2023, we received a very generous donation from the family of Betty Sue Orr. This contribution enabled us to refresh and add to our landscaping, we purchased a massage chair that is especially beneficial to our participants in wheelchairs, and we replaced the old tile in the front room of the annex with vinyl flooring. As a result of the landscaping updates, we received the Murray City Beautification Award in September!

The Calloway County Library donated a large projector screen, and in June of 2023 *Movies on Main* was created in the former lunch room in the 702 Main building, complete with a popcorn popper and concessions.

In July of 2023, Walter Hartsfield donated a pickleball net, paddles and balls. He also taped off the court for us in the gym, and began volunteering two days a week to teach everyone how to play and improve our skills.

This year members of the community collected aluminum cans for WATCH in memory of Sierra Robinson. When Sierra was doing her observations for her teaching classes, she had to go to different schools and, because she was studying Special Education, did observations in environments serving special education students and the individuals with disabilities. One of the places she visited for an observation was WATCH. She loved the program, and once she got through with school she wanted to volunteer whenever she could. She didn't get that opportunity, unfortunately. From the middle of May (her birthday) to the middle of July (when she went Home) her mother chooses a charity or a project to honor her memory and help others the way she always did. This year she chose WATCH. Several people met to put their cans in the cotton wagon at WATCH on July 17th, 2024.

RECYCLING

Recycling is an ongoing fundraiser that assists us with operational costs. Aluminum cans may be dropped off for recycling in the cotton wagon that is parked on the west side of the building, in the driveway off Main Street. We appreciate everyone that has brought their cans throughout the last 40 years, and we want you to know we sincerely appreciate your donations.

FUNDRAISERS

In 2023, Aligned Health offered to Host a Pickleball Tournament (*Pickleball Madness*) as an annual fundraiser benefiting WATCH. We held the first tournament on September 14, 2023 at the Calloway County Park, and raised \$8,350.00 to assist with operating expenses of the center. In 2024, the name of the tournament was changed to the *Ava Watkins Memorial Pickleball Madness Tournament*, and was held on October 21. We held the tournament at First Baptist Church, because of rain on the day of the tournament. The second tournament raised \$13,203.00 to help with the cost of operational expenses.

In August of 2023 *Howling for Hope* held their annual *Howl at the Moon III* Music festival, and designated part of the revenue to WATCH. We received \$500.00 from the event. On September 23, 2024, The *Howl at the Moon IV* Music Festival was held with all proceeds benefiting WATCH. We received a donation of \$1,500.00 from the 2024 event.

IN MEMORY

Family and friends we have lost include Jewel Garner and Nancy Proctor (2022), Bob Saywell, Kevin Richardson, Sonny Proctor and Judith Vaughn (2023), and Ava Watkins, Karen Birdsong and Maddie Flatt (2024).

NEW CAMPAIGN FILM

In March of 2024, we began working with A&SG Film and Sound Makers (Josh and Samantha Marberry) to create an updated film campaign focusing on WATCH. It will consist of a centerpiece film that introduces WATCH through documentary hearted elements and interviews that sum up the goals, services and history of our organization. We will also have a body of shorter supporting works that expands on the centerpiece film to focus on elements such as a charitable giving call to action, documentary-hearted film portraits, testimonials, television commercials, media materials and still frames. We are excited to show a preview of the centerpiece film for the first time at our Ruby Anniversary Christmas party on December 11.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

We continue to offer a variety of educational choices that make learning fun. Some of the classes that have been offered are Nutrition, Cooking, Safety, Science, arts & crafts, Lifestyle Skills, Gardening, Manners, Budgeting, Math and Reading class. Jennifer Billington has been volunteering her time to teach a writing class, and will be publishing a book written by members of her class in the near future.

We have also recently *adopted* a calf through the *Discovery Dairy Adopt a Cow Program*. Our calf's name is Fireball, and we will follow her development and receive pictures of her throughout her life. Participants will also learn what it takes to raise a dairy cow, and what dairy farmers do each day.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES AT THE CENTER

We schedule many of our ongoing activities on a weekly or monthly basis. Regularly scheduled classes and activities include:

Morning Devotion with Brother Stahler, classes with the Funky Monkey, BU Yoga, bowling, pickleball practice with Walter Hartsfield, book club at the Calloway County Library, exercise class, Dance Class with Miss Kailey, music with Donna Darnell, activities with Murray State University student-athletes, art at the Murray Art Guild, Murray State Best Buddies program, Cooking through the Calendar with the Extension office, and Pet Therapy.

COMMUNITY INTEGRATION CONTACT INFORMATION:

If you or anyone you know has a hobby, talent, community event or educational activity that you are willing to share, or if you work at an area business and would like to give our participants a tour, please contact Donna Dick (Activities Coordinator) at 270-759-1965 extension 101.

SPECIAL OUTINGS AND ACTIVITIES

There have been so many outings and activities since November of 2022 it would be impossible to list them all! We had a great fish fry at the center with hush puppies, slaw, fries, white beans and green beans, a water day, a Hawaiian Luau, Halloween Haunted House and special holiday celebrations. Some of the most popular outings have been:

- A trip to Paducah for Jurassic Quest
- Penny Pumpkin Patch
- Tour of iWIS
- Tour of Jarvis Vision Center
- Manicures and Pedicures
- Tour of WNBS
- Sustainability Festival at the Arboretum
- Tour of Pella
- Barns Family Kettle Corn
- Hippie Daze at Kenlake
- LBL (Elk & Bison Range, Planetarium, Homeplace)
- Trip to Sanctuary Farm
- Fishing at Key West Farms
- Sweet Jordan's Ice Cream
- Discovering Dreams Day Camp
- Muddy Waters Designs for Candle Making
- Hummingbird Program
- Murray Theatre and Movies in Paducah
- Hospital Tour
- Bingo in Benton
- Yard Sales
- Louisville Orchestra
- BBQ on the River
- Tater Day
- Trigg County Ham Festival
- Discovery Park Native American Pow Wow
- Splat Painting
- Belew's and other area restaurants
- Plays at Johnson Theatre at Murray State
- Calloway County School Bus Garage Tour
- Girls Day Out and Boys Day Out
- Swimming at Jimmy Baker's house
- Dinosaur Exhibit
- Summer Reading at Calloway Count Library
- Sampling different Coffee houses

WISH LIST

Jigsaw Puzzles, Cleaning Supplies, Walmart and Amazon gift cards, paper plates – forks – spoons, Wii Games, Educational Material, Laundry Detergent, Dishwasher Detergent, ipads or tablets, Craft supplies, Trash bags

REMINDERS:

Our Ruby Anniversary Christmas Celebration will be held on Wednesday, December 11 at Noon. You should have received an invitation with a RSVP card attached.

We will be closed December 19 – January 1, 2025 for Christmas and New Year.

In the event of bad weather this winter, please check Snowman 6 on the WPSD TV website for closing announcements.

