

# Green Opportunities

Dear Ms. Phillips and Board Members,

I am pleased to nominate the local non-profit, Green Opportunities, for this year's award. As you examine their background please note how they train local kids (some with brushes with the law) for a future in green jobs. They also provide important education to disadvantaged kids. Finally, there is a real impact on energy use as these kids do energy audits and help weatherize homes.

They do much much more but this impressed me and led me to donate.

This is leadership: education, training, and impact.

Best,

Roger Hartley  
MPA Director  
Western Carolina University

This is their website for more information: <http://greenopportunities.org/>

Below is from the Green Opportuniteis website. I copied this and Mr. Hartley did not give much information about the organization in his submission.

#### **GREEN OPPORTUNITIES CHRONOLOGY TO DATE**

**Summer 2007** GO Co-Founder Dan Leroy begins conversations with Margie Meares of the Clean Air Community Trust about his ideas for a service-based training program, designed to prepare youth for green careers in the context of climate-action projects.

**August 2007** The Clean Air Community Trust agrees to help incubate and administer the program development process, thereby serving as a fiscal agent for grants. A CACT board member donates \$10,000 to hire Leroy as the new "Climate Corps" Project Director.

**Fall 2007** Leroy begins an initial exploratory process, meeting with representatives from several local organizations in an effort to identify potential collaborators.

**December 2007** Leroy hires ten Asheville-area high school students who form a "Climate Corps Youth Design Team." The team is charged with surveying the local youth about their awareness and interest in several issues including climate change, environmental service, and green careers. They also research several national programs that might serve as models for a local program.

**January 2008** Warren Wilson College students in Mallory McDuff's Community Organizing class perform a service-learning project in which they identify potential green

business partners and interview them about their interests regarding a potential green-jobs training program.

Leroy meets community activist and youth advocate DeWayne Barton through a mutual contact at the Western North Carolina Green Building Council. Barton has been working for several years in community restoration and to connect youth in his Burton Street neighborhood with employment opportunities.

**March 2008** Leroy and Barton travel to the first annual "Good Jobs, Green Jobs" conference in Pittsburgh, PA. While there, they decide to combine their efforts to develop a green-collar job training and placement program for young people, particularly from the West Riverside Weed and Seed neighborhood in West Asheville, who are out-of-school and not working.

**May 2008** CACT receives a mini-grant from Progress Energy's Community Energy Advisory Council (CEAC) for the Youth Leadership in Energy Efficiency Project (Youth LEEP), a weatherization and job-training project in the Burton Street neighborhood.

CACT hires Barton to help recruit youth and homeowners for Youth LEEP and other projects.

Leroy and Barton enlist green building/energy efficiency contractors Carl Donovan, Marcus Renner and Torin Kexel for Youth LEEP. Kexel begins volunteering with Leroy and Barton.

Leroy and Barton host a "Community Forum on Green Jobs for Local Youth" at the Pisgah View Community Center. The forum showcased the work of the Youth Design Team and the Warren Wilson students. Over 60 community stakeholders attended the forum and shared their perspectives on the needs and resources in our region that could give rise to a service-based green-jobs training program. The forum helped sow the seeds of several key partnerships including the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville, AB Tech, the City of Asheville, West Riverside Operation of Weed and Seed, Asheville City Schools, and the Land of Sky Regional Council.

**June 2008** Youth LEEP trains a dozen high schoolers from Burton Street and Pisgah View in weatherization techniques and performs energy efficiency retrofits on seven houses and one church in the Burton Street neighborhood.

**Summer 2008** CACT develops contracts with the Asheville Housing Authority and Land of Sky to develop a pilot green-collar job-training program. The funding allows

Leroy and Barton to begin planning and recruitment efforts for the program, now known as the Asheville Green Opportunity Corps, or Asheville GO. Kexel is hired on to develop and implement the Clean Energy curriculum.

Representatives from various organizations—many of whom attended the initial Community Forum—begin attending stakeholder meetings to develop the Asheville GO pilot program curriculum.

**August 2008** Alana Pierce begins volunteering with Asheville GO, performing administrative and grant writing support.

**September 2008** Leroy, Barton and Kexel launch Asheville GO with program support from several local organizations and businesses. Eight young adults, all from low-income neighborhoods including seven from public housing, begin the program.

**December 2008** Six of the original eight Asheville GO members graduate from the "Pre-Apprenticeship" phase and move on to apprenticeships with local companies and nonprofits.

Kexel, with Asheville GO trainees, begins performing home energy audits and basic weatherization services for private clients under the Clean Air Community Trust umbrella. The program, which became known as the GO Energy Team, is expected to grow into a fee-for-service program while providing additional on-the-job training for Asheville GO members.

An Asheville GO Advisory Committee, comprised of key stakeholders, Asheville GO members and interested parties, is formed and begins meeting every other month to support public relations, fundraising, program development, and organizational development activities. One explicit focus of the group is building the foundation for a new organization, known as Green Opportunities, to house Asheville GO and other programs.

**January 2009** Asheville GO members begin their apprenticeships. Apprentice Hosts include,

FLS Energy, Sundance Power Systems, Winter Green, the Asheville Housing Authority, Lightning Bug Electric and the GO Energy Team.

Alana Pierce transitions from volunteer to Office Manager.

**March 2009** Advisory Committee members and other friends of the program are asked to submit applications for either the Advisory Council or the governing Board of Directors for Green Opportunities.

**April 2009** Leroy and Barton review applications and formally invite new GO board members.

**May 2009** The first official board meeting for Green Opportunities is held. Among other business, the board approves draft Articles of Incorporation.

The Articles of Incorporation for Green Opportunities, Inc. are submitted and subsequently approved by the NC Secretary of State's office.

The Asheville City Council approves the Housing and Community Development committee's Community-Based Development Grant (CDBG and CDBG-R)) action plan which includes approximately \$162,425 in funding for Asheville GO across two funding categories. The non-construction grant is administered by Mountain Housing Opportunities and the construction grant is administered by the WNC Green Building Council.

Leroy contacts Pisgah Legal Services via Thalia Hoy and Anne Bamberger who in turn link GO with attorney Bill Whelan.

### **Relevant Future Plans**

Beginning in September of 2009 Asheville GO will recruit 24 young adults from low-income neighborhoods and train them in a variety of green collar career pathways including sustainable agriculture, clean energy, ecological restoration and landscaping, and green construction.

Once established as a 501(c)(3), we plan to spin the GO Energy Team off into its own LLC that would be owned by Green Opportunities managed independently.

We intend to develop other, similar green microenterprises designed to put Asheville GO members and graduates to work in a supportive environment while supporting the ongoing operations of the nonprofit.

We hope to assist other communities in developing GO or GO-like programs in other parts of the state and region.

**Jay Stewart**

From: Elizabeth Teague

Sent: Wednesday, August 04, 2010 10:13 AM

To: 'Gillian Phillips'; Bob Jolly; Caroline Sutton; Charles Smith; CIBO;  
Claude Chandler; David Brigman; David West; Dawn Godwin; Jacob McLean;  
John Bonham; Jon Creighton; Lynn Hicks; Maggie Ullman; Michelle  
Pugliese; Rodney Porter; Ryan Griffith; Steve Sloan; Tony Candler  
Subject: RE: EAB BELA Guidelines - Ok to nominate now?

Thanks to the subcommittee - this is great. I'm going to go ahead and throw a nomination out there for discussion at the meeting...

In addition to the two listed as examples by the committee that I would certainly support, I would like to go ahead and nominate **Jay Stewart** for your consideration. Jay has been a creative force for environmental stewardship in our region and would seem to qualify for the award under the proposed guidelines as one who has reduced environmental impact through his creative re-use of land/site development and his personal contributions of time, money and leadership that continue to have significant impact.

In 1995, along with partners Bill Goacher and David Moore, Jay purchased the former Burlington Industries factory on Riverside Drive and transformed it into the home of over 30 businesses. This industrial site had been empty for years, but now is a vibrant industrial park that has provided flexible work space for artists, tent manufacturers, book distributors, and the Savage Kayak Company among others. They also did the same with the former Drexel site in Black Mountain, converting an empty industrial site into a business incubator that now is home to Kunkel Valve, Blue Ridge Woodworking and the Pisgah Brewing Company. It also provided the start-up space for FLS Solar to establish itself in our region. For more information see:

<http://riversidebusinesspark.net/history.shtml>

Jay has contributed to environmental stewardship in other ways as well. Through his company Stewart Realty and Investments, Jay has worked to reclaim office and residential space within the River District and in older buildings throughout Asheville. He has served on the Board of Habitat for Humanity and was instrumental in establishing the Habitat Home Store near Biltmore Village. He facilitated the establishment of Highland Brewing Company at their current location at a former warehouse space. He has stayed active in local government, and participated in Planning Meetings that led to the update of Land Use Codes in Black

Mountain. He proved a tremendous resource and asset to Town discussions, and always made the argument that environmental stewardship and economic development go hand in hand.

Jay's influence will continue for years to come in the businesses, organizations, and government agencies he touched. I hope the EAB will support this nomination.

Elizabeth Teague, AICP  
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