



Frances Farthing's Legacy to WNC Teachers

The Community Foundation has the unique role of bringing people with resources together with those who need them. In 1994, we began working with Frances Farthing, a woman who grew up in a family of teachers in Avery and Watauga counties. Both of her parents taught school in the shadow of Beech Mountain before those hills were transformed into resort communities. Her grandfathers traveled the region, teaching in dozens of schools, for two to four months at a time, as was the practice of the day.



As an adult, Frances was troubled by the high number of children who lose their interest in education and drop out of school. "In my family, education was the most important thing," she said. She was looking for a way to have a positive impact on students in poor communities when she heard about The Community Foundation. As she created the Ben and Dixie Glenn Farthing Fund, named for her parents, she said, "I know that a good teacher with ample resources can change a child's life." With Frances' input, CFWNC designed a program to provide grants to rural teachers for creative learning opportunities and to keep children involved and interested in school. Farthing died in 2000 and left the residue of her estate to the Ben and Dixie Glenn Farthing Fund. Her vision of helping teachers lives on and will continue for generations through the [Learning Links](#) grant program.

Learning Links grants were first awarded in 1995. In the years since, over \$750,000 has been awarded in more than 1,000 grants to Western North Carolina schools.