

# Quest



Newsletter of Industrial Opportunities, Inc.

## Industrial Opportunities, Inc. “The First Decade” 1974 - 1984

With 2024 being Industrial Opportunities, Inc.’s 50th year of serving Cherokee, Clay & Graham counties, the Quest newsletters this year will focus on the history of IOI. Each newsletter will cover a decade. Industrial Opportunities, Inc. would like to thank you for your continued support in serving our community.



Marble Activity Center- 1974

**1974** - A group of parents of children with disabilities who were aging out of the special programs in the tri-county school systems came together to discuss the need for an activity center to provide some measures of independence and productive life for their children. At that time, the communities offered no structured programs. The parents formed Marble Activity Day Center that later became incorporated as Industrial Opportunities, Inc. There were 2 staff members, 6 clients and a budget of \$27,000.

**1975** - Wire reclamation and basket weaving were the mainstays of productive activity for 18 clients who earned \$4,701 this year. Another staff member was added and the budget increased to \$51,915.

**1976** - The corporate name was changed to Industrial Opportunities, Inc. IOI moved to a larger facility at the old Ogden School in Brasstown.

Vans for transporting clients were provided by Development Disabilities Services of NC, the county commissioners included IOI in the budget for operating funds, Tri-County Community College began a part-time Wood-

shop instructor, and the State of Franklin Service to Senior Citizens provided a Senior AIDE. The 24 clients earned over \$10,000 and the budget climbed to \$75,605.

**1977** - A grant from the NC Knights of Columbus provided tools and equipment for the training of handicapped adults in the new woodshop which began a new line of lawn chairs, plant stands, and bird feeders. Another van was added with matching monies from the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. The budget reached \$109,642.

**1978** - A New England businessman, D. Joseph O’Connor, donated his entire elastic products business to IOI. The Elastic Products Division of IOI came into being. The elastic product line of 17 different items includes suspenders of all kinds, sea ties, head bands, leg bands and belts. The Methodists provided a grant for an



Ogden School 1976

independent Living Skills Program where clients learn rudimentary skills needed for independent living. A van driver was provided by Graham County under the CETA Program. The staff increased to 6, and clients to 35 with earnings of \$16,700, and the budget totaled \$231,116.

**1979** - Client enrollment increased to 40 handicapped adults and there was a need to build a larger, more efficient facility. Plans were developed for a solar heated and cooled metal building. A furniture restoration project was initiated in the woodshop, and a store in Andrews, The Mountain Emporium, was opened to sell products made not only by handicapped workers, but also by Appalachian craftsman and women. Clients earnings topped \$23,000 and the budget amounted to \$336,000.

**1980** - Aluminum storm window production began, as well

as construction of a new 10,000 square foot facility in Marble. With the assistance of TVA who, in conjunction with NASA, designed and provided a solar system as a demonstration project for the

metal building. Much needed funding obtained through two grants awarded by NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for \$75,000 and the Kresge Foundation \$100,000 and a loan from the Farmers Home Administration for \$125,000.

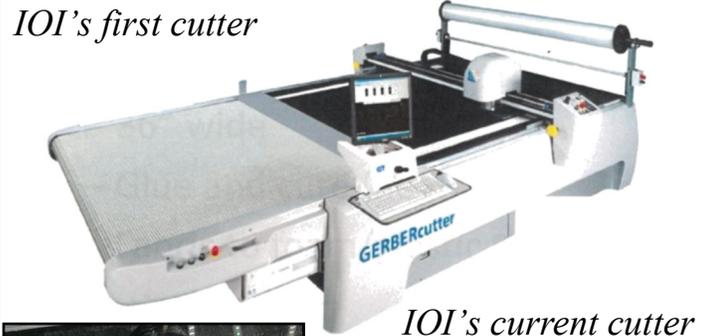
**1981** - There was a need for new vans to continue to provide transportation services to Cherokee, Clay & Graham counties. IOI received donations from three sources to purchase a van.

**1982** - IOI moved to the new 10,000 square foot facility in Marble. Total cost of the new facility was \$429,805. Services to Graham County were added. We started work on several new contracts: camouflage suits for a private firm in Montana; disposable aprons for government contacts. Two staff members were added. Annual operating budget exceeded \$500,000.

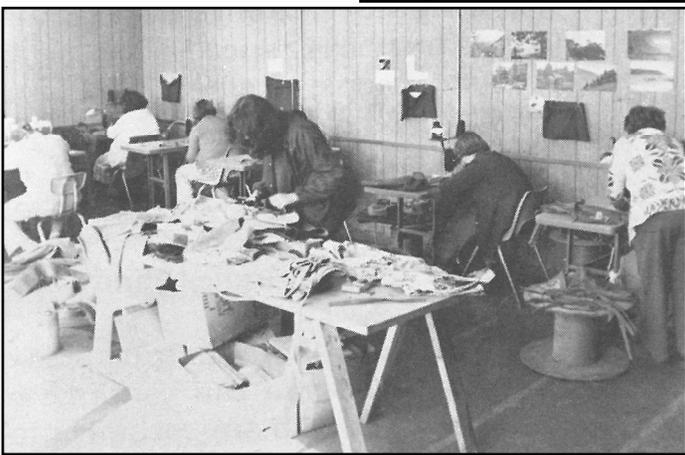
*Continued Inside...*



*IOI's first cutter*



*IOI's current cutter*





Ogden School 1976

## Quest Fellowship

- In memory of June W. Annis by Judy Annis
- In memory of Chris & Susan O'Brien by David & Susan Winterle
- In memory of Dwight Hollowell by Delmer & Deborah Chilton
- In memory of Arnie Golem by John & Jeanette Golem
- In memory of Annie Golem by John & Jeanette Golem
- In memory of Paul Golem by John & Jeanette Golem

## Supporters

- Fred & Karen Willes
- Terry & Melinda Swaim
- Sharon Robertson
- Mike & Robin Stevenson
- Brian & Nancy Mitchell
- Tom O'Brien
- Lynne Manning
- Karen Ann Simmons
- Rashid & Sabiha Khan
- Maurice & Suzie West
- George Heilner
- Jill Kelly
- James Apple
- Andrew Reichman
- Community Foundation of Western NC



Andrews Plant 2023

Continued from front...



Marble Plant 1982

1984 - IOI began to Integrate Non-Disabled Workers with a Disabled Workforce - Affirmative Industry Model. Affirmative Industries are businesses that make a strong effort to provide

1983 - IOI had a fun year and was making progress on the pathway to independence. Clients attended Special Olympics, went camping, and had a float in the Christmas parade. The 1st Annual Special Populations Bowling Tournament was held. Most of all, they were enjoying the new building.

disabled workers with the opportunity for valued employment. Affirmative industries employ workers with and without disabilities. It is believed that integrated employment will enhance the development of positive work attitudes and habits leading to increase in the productivity of disabled workers.

## Dedicated Clients Since First Decade



These four clients have been dedicated to Industrial Opportunities, Inc. since the first decade. Pictured (L to R): David Hughes (49 years of service), Doug Earley (45 years of service), Susan Cordin (39 years of service) & Tim Martin (40 years of service).

# IOI History - March 1974 - January 2024 Comparison

## Then (1974):

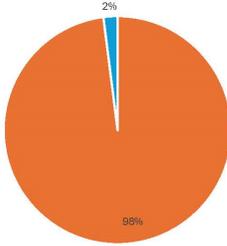
Workforce: 8 (2 Employees, 6 Clients)

IOI Rented a 1,200 sq. ft. building

IOI operating budget was \$27,000

IOI Sales Revenue \$649

IOI was 98% gov't supported & 2% self supported



## Now (2024):

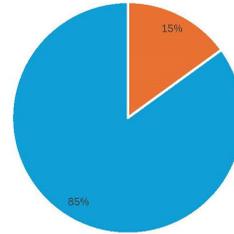
177 (124 Emp., 53 Clients) (75 Students w/ high schools)

IOI owns a 108,344 sq. ft. building

IOI operating budget is \$9,141,914

IOI Sales Revenue \$7,515,170

IOI is 85% self supported & funded 15% fee for service



Wages & Benefits 2002 - 2003 \$2,233,787

2023 - 2024 \$6,021,808

\* Note - IOI moved into Andrews, NC Lee Plant on 2/28/2003

**Total Wages & Benefits 2003 - 2024 \$130,211,658**

Over \$1,129,429 Sales Tax & Income tax generated annually by IOI workforce

All Gifts are Tax Deductible - Industrial Opportunities, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

### I make this gift:

- In memory or honor of \_\_\_\_\_.
- To benefit the client activity fund / IOI Endowment fund.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: Industrial Opportunities, Inc. • P.O. Box 1649 • Andrews, NC 28901**

**Phone 828-321-4754 • Fax 828-321-4784 • E-mail [jessie@elasticproducts.com](mailto:jessie@elasticproducts.com)**

**[www.industrialopportunities.com](http://www.industrialopportunities.com)**

**Industrial Opportunities, Inc.**

Post Office Box 1649

Andrews, NC 28901

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Andrews, NC  
Permit #1649

A CARF Accredited Equal Employment/Affirmative Action Employer and Service Provider