

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 808

By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to recognize and commend Dawn of Hope upon the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary.

WHEREAS, community-based services for intellectually disabled children and adults were almost non-existent in 1968; and

WHEREAS, parents of such individuals in northeast Tennessee established the WACARC League in the mid-1960s to consider the need for a day center; and

WHEREAS, Pat Gotch, a representative of the local Jaycettes, expressed an interest and willingness to assist in determining the need; and

WHEREAS, a group of civic-minded individuals led by the late Jay Gump expressed concern for this community need; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gump, along with Dr. and Mrs. Thomas McKee and the Reverend James M. Coleman of St. John's Episcopal Church, formed an organizing committee; and

WHEREAS, a \$6,000 annual budget was developed, with Ann Bishop being hired as director and Pat Gotch as assistant director; and

WHEREAS, the committee was expanded to include Dr. Kenneth Roark, pediatrician, and Robert Owens, director of the Johnson City Mental Health Center; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee issued a Charter of Incorporation to the Dawn of Hope Development Center on November 4, 1968; and

WHEREAS, the center opened in the basement of the St. John's Episcopal Church, serving some five individuals; and

WHEREAS, the Dawn of Hope received a tremendous outpouring of community support through financial and in-kind resources in the early years prior to any type of governmental funding; and

WHEREAS, due to continuous growth, the center relocated four times between 1968 and 1972; and

WHEREAS, the City of Johnson City made available a former segregated elementary school facility, the Stratton Annex, in 1972; and

WHEREAS, the center was awarded a construction grant by the State of Tennessee in 1974 to construct an additional building specifically for the adults served; and

WHEREAS, shortly thereafter, the center opened a greenhouse program to provide hortitherapy services as well as to begin a retail plant sales operation; and

WHEREAS, Dawn of Hope developed a reputation for growing Christmas poinsettias and spring bedding plants; and

WHEREAS, Watauga Mental Health, under the direction of Robert Owens and in cooperation with the City of Johnson City, planned and constructed the Watauga Vocational Workshop in 1982 for those clients who were seeking employment skills; and

WHEREAS, the agency ceased serving children and began exclusively serving adults in 1986; and

WHEREAS, in 1987, one of the first charity golf tournaments in the area was organized to raise funds for the Dawn of Hope Foundation; and

WHEREAS, the Watauga Vocational Center began a supported employment program in 1988 and has developed employment opportunities in the community for the past thirty years; and

WHEREAS, in 1995, the agency opened its first supported-living residential unit with three individuals who formerly resided at Greene Valley Developmental Center; and

WHEREAS, the residential program has grown and can now serve as many as seventy individuals in some twenty-five homes; and

WHEREAS, in 2002, the agency relocated to the former Stratton Elementary School building, which was made available by the City of Johnson City; and

WHEREAS, in 2006 and 2009, the Dawn of Hope Foundation, through grant assistance from the Tennessee Housing Development Authority, was able to initiate the "Houses for Hope" program by constructing some twelve homes utilized by the foundation's residential program recipients; and

WHEREAS, the organization continues to serve individuals from the four northeastern counties of Carter, Sullivan, Unicoi, and Washington; and

WHEREAS, Dawn of Hope has been served by hundreds of volunteer board members throughout its fifty years; and

WHEREAS, Ann Bishop, Thelma Start, Colonel Richard Krueger, John Hinkle, Dennis Staton, and Lee Chase have served as Executive Directors of Dawn of Hope through the fifty years of its existence; and

WHEREAS, the Dawn of Hope has served thousands of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families; and

WHEREAS, the growth and sustainability of the Dawn of Hope could not have been achieved without the support of local governments, numerous civic and community organizations, families of those served, volunteers, and sponsors, all of whom truly make it a *community* organization; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby recognize and commend the Dawn of Hope on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, extending our best wishes to this estimable organization for much continued success in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.