



Where Needs Meet **AGAPE Love**

January 2018

Agape Open Slated for May 19

AGAPE MEMBER CHURCHES

- Bedrock Community Church
- Covenant Fellowship
- CrossPointe/Franklin Heights Baptist Church
- Dwelling Place Christian Fellowship
- EastLake Community Church
- Flint Hills Baptist Church
- Goodview Baptist Church
- Halesford Baptist Church
- Inner-Faith Fellowship Ministries
- Morgans Baptist Church
- Palestine Baptist Church
- Radford Baptist Church
- Rocky Mount Baptist Church
- Staunton Baptist Church
- Vitalize Church
- Westlake Baptist Church

PRAYER FOR AGAPE

Make a New Year's plan to schedule time to join join as you are able in prayer for Agape ministry, clients, volunteers! Join the Agape Prayer Team in the Meeting Center at

8:45 to 9:45 am

Thursday — January 25

Tuesday — February 13

Thursday — February 22

Agape's 14th Annual Open will be held at The Westlake on Saturday, May 19. Enjoy a complete program of special events, 18 holes of golf, including cart, an opportunity to win great prizes, and an awards dinner immediately following the tournament.

Registration is \$65/person or \$260/foursome. Prizes will be awarded for three lowest team scores, longest drive (both men and women), and closest to the pin (men and women).

Tournament Sponsorships are available for \$1000+; Gold Sponsor for \$500 - \$999; Hole Sponsor for \$200 - \$499; and Program Sponsor for \$100 - \$199. Additional details and registration forms are online at www.agapecentersml.org or mail registration check (memo Agape Open) to The Agape Center, PO Box 573, Moneta, VA 24121. You may contact Bob Winters at 484-888-1856 for more information.



Jerry Henderson and Jack Lipscomb watch as B J Henderson celebrates her shot in the 2017 Agape Open.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Pray for Agape — Join the Prayer Team in the Meeting Center to pray for the day at Agape.

February 7, 2018—Getting Ahead Classes Begin (See Pages 3-4)

March 14, 2018—Roanoke Valley Gives (See Page 3)

May 19, 2018—Agape Center's 14th Annual Golf Tournament—The Westlake—Registration at 12 noon; T-Off at 1 pm.

DaVita Kidney Care Donates to Agape

Agape Selected to Participate in Healthy Eating Program

Judy Harper, Pantry Director, announced that the Agape Center has been chosen to participate in a new program of Feeding America Southwest Virginia (FASWVA). The Food Bank is encouraging healthier eating by helping people have better, healthier choices of food, particularly fresh produce.

From over 300 food pantries served by FASWVA, nineteen were selected to participate in this program. The selection was based on several factors, including the size of the program, the number of clients served, and the availability of refrigerated storage space. This program is intended to broaden the efforts of FASWVA from supplying food to supporting the overall health of clients. Grants have been received by FASWVA from Morgan Stanley, Altria, and the Federation of Virginia Food Banks to support the purchase and distribution of fresh produce.



Judy Harper

Agape will begin participation in this produce initiative within the next few months. Judy says, "It is so exciting that Feeding America Southwest Virginia is listening to us and doing what they can to help us provide fresh, healthy options for our clients!"



The Agape Center recently received a check for \$650 from DaVita Kidney Care in Salem, as part of the DaVita Way of Giving. This program allows each clinic to make charitable giving decisions in the communities DaVita is located. Pictured are James Arrington, Facility Administrator, presenting the check to Sue Lipscomb, Agape's Executive Director. Also pictured are from left: Brian Echols, RN; Robin Quay, Registered Dietitian, Pam Aldridge, RN; Margaret Winkler, RN, Clinical Coordinator; Kim Winfrey, Administrative Assistant; and Heather Clark, Patient Care Technician.



Agape will be one of a select few food pantries to participate in the fresh produce program of FASWVA.



By the Numbers Served. . .

December, 2017
Families 938
Individuals 3270

December, 2016
Families 992
Individuals 3324

Welcome New Volunteers

Judy Caldwell – Clerk
Donna Cosmato—Reception
Judy Gruber – Clothing
Shannon Gallier –Clothing
Gary McSwain—USDA

January 2018 Volume 10 Issue 1

The Agape Newsletter is a monthly publication produced by The Agape Center for volunteers, member churches, and other interested individuals and organizations. Comments may be sent to:

Executive Director—Sue Lipscomb
agapecentersml@aol.com
Newsletter Editor—Karen Baker
karenbaker015@gmail.com

Published by The Agape Center
1159 Promised Land Road (PO Box 573),
Moneta, VA 24121 (Phone: 540/296-0609)
www.agapecentersml.org

Getting Ahead Program Continues to Thrive

December Grads Express Appreciation for Class

The third class of Agape Clients graduated from the Getting Ahead Program in December, 2017. Each of the ten individuals shared with the audience their perceptions and appreciation for the program, which are summarized below:

I thank you so much for giving us this opportunity to learn and feel accomplished. It really boosted my self-esteem and self-worth! I really feel like it helped me to feel like I can go out and further my education. (Leah)

I gained encouragement, empowerment, love, many new lifelong friend in this class. (Pam)

There are many different ways to define poverty. So many people motivating me to put God first. There are many people on their own journey to building smart, reachable goals starting from being GA investigators. Learning the right ways to build up yourself and others along the way. God has met every single person in this class exactly where He wanted to. This class has made me a stronger, more confident person. My spiritual life has grown beyond words. I've met new friends going through the same journey in life as I am. (Lori)

I have a voice and I have really gained confidence in myself. There are things I have done in this class that I never would have done without the encouragement I got. (Sheila)

I gained godly direction for my life. I gained so much more than knowledge Thank you so much for choosing me to have this opportunity of a lifetime. Now I have the basic and necessary tools in my tool belt to be a wonderful, godly and successful person in life. "From Rags to Riches!" (Nadine)

I have gained friendships and a better future. We've all grown from this class. We are all different than from the time we started. (Sara)

I gained "myself" back. My input is important. I CAN MAKE a difference! I might live in poverty, but I can work my way out with my God's help. (Betsy)

I found this class: Gave back my place in life. Provided tools to get out of my hole I am in. Provided feedback and how to work it into my life. Helped me realize that other people are out there the same as me. This was a great class. (Judy)

This class is such an eye-opener and really informs you about how to get out of poverty, but most important, understanding poverty is not just being poor. My teachers



Agape Clients graduated from the Getting Ahead Program in December. They are from left: Carmen Roberts, Mark Plumb*, Judy Caldwell, Ron Cordell*, Nadine Womble, Lori France, Sheila Coles, Jan Hogle*; Front Row: Betty Helderman, Charlotte Wood, Sara Eizler, Pam Randolph, and Lin Plumb*.

***These individuals were facilitators of the group.**

in my GA class are so well-informed and caring, and they take the time to get to know each one of the students. This class has made me realize I can put all the tools I have learned to use in my community. Please don't give up on this GA program. It is and will always be important to me and gave me the know-how to apply myself. (Carmen)

Thank you so very much for all you did for us. Class is so informative. I learned about finances and steps to move forward out of poverty. (Charlotte)

Fill Our Lake With Agape Love!

Agape has joined the "Roanoke Valley Gives" campaign, which is a one-day fundraiser on Wednesday, March 14, 2018. This event is sponsored by the Roanoke Valley Foundation to encourage our community to give to non-profit organizations. On March 14, businesses and individuals can donate by going to the Agape website and clicking on the donation tab to make a credit card contribution.

This is a very easy way to help fill our lake with Agape love. Rick says, "We have adopted the theme, 'Fill our lake with Agape love', where lake symbolizes water and life, and Agape love shows the unwavering concern we have for our clients."

Getting Ahead Program Adds Support for Graduates

The final official reunion of the first Getting Ahead (GAP) graduates was held recently. Four of the twelve graduates met amongst tears of sadness and tears of joy, smiles, hugs, encouragement, and rejoicing over victories. Some had lost weight and were able to reduce medications; some continue with chronic pain, but rejoice in every step forward. Two are firmly involved in their churches, and all are trusting God and seeking Him more than at any time in their lives.

Kim Wright, who is celebrating nearly 1000 days of being sober, said, "I realized that I'm not a city girl. I was able to move from my home in Bedford to a acreage in the country and I'm so happy in this environment. In fact, I'm happier than I have ever been in my entire life, even though I am poorer than I have ever been. I'm so grateful for God in my life." She is now serving as a volunteer telephone mentor for AA, has been able to set boundaries, and has "learned to turn things over to God".

Jan Hogle and Pam Sinex, co-facilitators of this class, were on hand to provide encouragement and kudos for the progress each client is making. Lin Plumb, who has just completed facilitator training, presented the next step: a case study project that graduates will volunteer to participate in. This study will document the premise that GAP helps people take steps toward getting out of poverty and making life improvements. The results of this endeavor will help Agape mentors be more understanding to serve clients better, will aid in securing ongoing funding for the program, and to continue to support the graduates in achieving their goals.



From left, Annamarie Hackman, Shelly Olman, Stephanie Poindexter, Pam Sinex, Kim Wright, Lin Plumb, and Jan Hogle.

Plumbs Facilitating Next Getting Ahead Class

Mark and Lin Plumb moved to the Smith Mountain Lake area less than two years ago, after living their entire lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and yet have gotten very involved in this rural community! One of their primary volunteer roles is working at Agape where both are mentors. Most recently, both have also become involved with the Getting Ahead Program (GAP) offered at Agape. Mark co-facilitated the class this past Fall, along with Lead Facilitator, Jan Hogle, and Lin audited those sessions in preparation to be a facilitator. They are now looking forward to co-facilitating the next GA class, starting in February 2018.



Lin and Mark Plumb, New Co-Facilitators of GAP

full-time pastoral ministry. Throughout his entire life he has also volunteered in a number of community organizations, all of which have been helpful preparation for Agape and Getting Ahead. Mark points to serving as a Pastor and his volunteer service with the Salvation Army as being particularly important. "Helping people to understand the resources available to them, how to work within the system, and to have a voice in the system are important skills that we develop in the GA class," Mark said.

Lin has also gained a wealth of experience from her 40-year career in human resources in a large engineering and manufacturing company. She says, "I interacted with many different types of people, and I think God has prepared me to connect with many types of people. He has always given me great joy in interacting with people from different cultures,

Until retiring and moving to the Lake, Mark and Lin had both lived in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania their entire lives, including their college years, which is where they met. Mark has had a number of different career experiences, including community banking, and most recently,

Construction Continues through the Winter Months



Housewares Now Settled in New Space—Construction Starts on Mentoring Rooms

Sheila Saunders(left), Manager of the Housewares Department, is thrilled with the expanded space for this department. She says, “We are so blessed to be in this new area as it has provided better lighting and more room for us to work.”

Other departments are transitioning to their new areas, including Intake and the Book Department.

The roof is on the Storage Shed (right). Work has begun on two additional mentoring rooms, and other renovations are in process.



PLUMBS: Leading GAP's Third Year at Agape

FROM 4

backgrounds, and countries and developing relationships with them.”

The Plumbs have done mission work in many parts of the world, including developing countries, living in the homes of those they were serving, and working along-side them in close relationship. They treasure each of these experiences, deep relationships and all that God has taught them through mission work, which remains a shared passion.

They are very excited about facilitating this next GA class together. Lin said, “When Jan (Hogle) was training the mentors on the GA class, I clearly heard God speak to my heart, saying, ‘I have prepared you to do these things.’ I had done a lot of training and facilitating throughout my career, but I wasn’t sure I wanted to give that much time to GAP. That all changed once I sat in on the class—I fell in love with the people and the purpose of the GAP.”

Mark noted that, “The value of the Agape GAP is

taking the core Getting Ahead curriculum and adding the spiritual component. Our witness is what brings these principles to life and demonstrates how our own faith in Christ has helped us get through challenging situations. One outcome is that the participants become a really close-knit family, maintaining friendships beyond the class, keeping each other accountable, and encouraging one another in their walks with the Lord.”

Lin concluded with, “I have learned so much about poverty in this class that I didn't know before. The clients at Agape and especially in the GAP have taught us so much. It is humbling, but such a blessing to be able to learn so much from the class members, and to feel a part of this community.” Mark agreed, saying, “Serving in GAP has given us greater insight into the region and its economic challenges. We have plugged into the region in the short time we have lived here, largely because of what Agape clients and GAP Investigators in each class are teaching us.”

Agape Volunteers Serve in Many Ways

Agape Pantry Worker on Mission to Honduras

Agape Pantry Volunteer Verne Baker and Dr Ken Jones provided legs for twenty-three individuals whose legs had been amputated due to accidents, diabetes, or other conditions. The legs are manufactured in Blacksburg by friends of Ken for the sole purpose of providing them at no cost to people in third world countries.



Verne Baker (Pantry), right, and Dr Ken Jones (husband of Agape's Karen Jones) went to Honduras in November to provide prosthetic legs for amputees.

One of the individuals they helped was Maricio, whose motorcycle was broadsided, killing his sister and severing his leg. Seeing Mauricio waiting to be assessed, Ken said, "His expression caught my heart. There was an expression of anxiety and hope at the same time: he was clearly nervous about this new leg, but I could see hope in his eyes." After nine hours in the clinic, Ken continued, "I watched Mauricio walk through the guarded gate into the 'real world' as he turned around and flashed a hearty grin. It was clear he'd be back to his job in construction within two weeks. That really got me."

Verne described, "Maria Irene, 55, who tried to flee Honduras and come to America via the 'Death Train' in 2002. The train rumbles through Central America up to the US-Mexican border; there are no passenger cars on these cargo trains, which are teeming with the drug cartel thugs.

See LEGS, 7

Dick At Lee Named Volunteer of the Year in Newport News

Despite Thrive Peninsula being based in Newport News, the nonprofit's volunteer of the year lives in the Smith Mountain Lake area almost 200 miles away.

Dick At Lee, a former resident of Newport News, was honored by Thrive Peninsula in December for his work handling the organization's internet technology needs. The organization works to assist families and individuals with essential needs and manage crises on the Virginia Peninsula.

According to Thrive Executive Director Angela York, At Lee works remotely from his home but occasionally drives almost four hours to complete hands-on work with the organization. He logged 200 volunteer service hours in 2017, York said.

"I love Thrive and I love what they are doing," he said. "My father-in-law used to volunteer with them and it's just a great thing for the community. It's hard to find IT support that's reasonably priced and with internet connection, it's easy to log in from a distance."

At Lee has been volunteering with Thrive, formerly known as Denbigh United Christian Outreach, for about 19 years and lived in Newport News for 29 years before moving to Smith Mountain Lake about two and a half years ago. The Coast Guard veteran left Newport News after retiring from a job in which he led a staff of software developers who supported the Coast Guard.



Dick At Lee, Furniture Director at Agape, achieves recognition at his former volunteer job!

Editor's Note: This story was reprinted from the Daily Press, Newport News, VA. Press<http://www.dailypress.com/news/newport-news/dp-nws-evg-thrive-peninsula-dick-atlee-volunteer-2017-story.html>

From The Agape Book Shelf

Beyond the Shadows
By Robin Lee Hatcher



Diane Davis
Agape Book Reviewer

Deborah and Gideon were caught up in a whirlwind romance. He was a carpenter, she a receptionist. Their love blossomed and they were married in a small church. They started out with the same dreams that most have: a good marriage, a home, children, a happy life.

Gideon proved to be a good provider. They had two children. However, Gideon had withheld a dark secret. He was an alcoholic.

Many times he was late getting home from work; sometimes he was drunk when he got home; sometimes he didn't come home at all. Deborah consulted their pastor and friends. They tried to help, but his drinking got worse. Finally, he lost his job and Deborah was thinking of divorce.

A friend who had overcome his own addiction finally talked Gideon into going to a treatment center. Gideon was ready for a change. He knew he had to clean up his act, or lose his family.

Gideon and Deborah turned his treatment and their marriage over to God. Through their love for each other and their faith in God, their marriage survived and Gideon was freed from his addiction. Our God of second chances had given them a miracle.

This was close to my heart because I know from experience it can happen. DD

LEGS: Getting People Back on Two Feet

FROM 6

Desperate people scramble to ride on top of the train, but if they are unable to pay a fee to the cartel, they are tossed overboard, often resulting in death, injury, or severed limbs. Maria Irene was thrown off the top of the train, only to have the train run over her leg. She laid beside that train track until other family members were able to get off the train and come back to help her. She did not receive any medical care for thirty days, so it is a miracle she is even alive."



Maria Irene (right) and her daughter after receiving her prosthesis.

Ken concluded, "I've been on many medical mission trips, and have felt that I had helped people in some small way. However, since many of their medical conditions are chronic, at times it felt like I was



only applying a Band-aid – temporary relief without the follow-up and medications their illnesses demanded. But working with amputees has given me a new zeal to continue going to third world countries with this prosthetic project. The goal of Hope to Walk is always to show God's love for these souls while restoring their ability to work and provide for their families—an incredible plan!"

Mauricio with his wife, proudly displays his new leg.