



Where Needs Meet AGAPE Love

May, 2019

## Agape Designs New Program for Getting Ahead

### AGAPE MEMBER CHURCHES

Bedrock Church—Franklin County

Bedrock Community Church  
Covenant Fellowship

CrossPointe/Franklin Heights Church

Dwelling Place Christian Fellowship

EastLake Community Church

Flint Hill 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



Participants for the newly designed, Agape-specific program at the Equine Assisted Learning Center were from left: Grace Cooper, Mentor; Jan Hogle, Mentor Administrator and Getting Ahead Director; Sue Williams, Reception Director; Angela Jaramillo, Ginny Harris, Patti Galofaro, Mentors; Judy Harper, Pantry Director; Pastor Bill Griggs, Marion Reed, Mentors.

See **GETTING AHEAD**, 7-8

### Pantry Increased by 1250 Pounds of Food



Over 25 Agape volunteers helped the Annual Postal Food Drive by sorting/boxing grocery items and earning 1250 pounds of groceries for Agape's Pantry.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

May 20-24; 27-30 Joyous Junque—Need Volunteers to sort items—See PAGE 6

MAY 21 —1-3 PM —Sewing Projects— See PAGE 5

JUNE 1—10:30 AM—RIDE FOR HOPE—RADFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

June 27— Open Table Volunteers—See PAGE 6

## From Wandering Homeless to Following God!

When Hunter and Kaylee Stanley arrived in Virginia, they were jobless, homeless, and pregnant. They met while hitch-hiking around the country, running into each other in Colorado, Oregon, and California. They now feel that God was putting them together, as they fell in love and returned to his home in Virginia.

When they got to Virginia, Hunter’s mother suggested they come to Agape, as they needed ‘a lot of help.’ They’ve been coming to Agape for about eighteen months, and Kaylee also volunteered for several months in Clothing before their baby, Emerson, was born.

Kaylee said, “Agape has been so welcoming and made our transition to Virginia comfortable and safe. Our Mentor, Bill, invited us to Dwelling Place, and that connected us with such kind, caring people, we immediately felt welcome. Debbie and Bill (Griggs) have been a huge help, getting us off the streets, and we’ve been going to church at Dwelling Place ever since. A lady from the church offered her lower level two-bedroom apartment for us to live in, so we have a room for Emerson. Bill even married us!”

Debbie Griggs, Floor Supervisor when they came to Agape the first time, recalled, “I strongly knew God wanted Bill to mentor them. Since then we have built a friendship with them. We love them dearly and we have been very excited watching God work in their lives.” Bill added, “At the very first meeting I knew that their living situation needed to change; God truly put them in my heart.”

Hunter got a job with his dad working in a body repair shop in Lynchburg, and Kaylee is thrilled that she is able to be a stay-at-home mom, at least for now.

Kaylee said, “I wake up every day, thanking God for putting Agape and Bill and Debbie and Dwelling Place in our lives! When I am praying, I feel God so close – I get



the sensation of feeling whole, filled with love. Coming here has given us spiritual stability and guidance. I am constantly aware of what and how much He’s doing for me. I know that as I keep my mind on Him, He will keep us safe. I just want to follow Him and do what I feel He’s telling me to do.”

Bill concluded, “They will do well on the path that God has planned for them.”

Kaylee concluded, “Agape is so amazing. I don’t know where we would be without you. It really helps to feel the love and community here and also for all the assistance and support you have given us.”

**By the Numbers . . .**

**April 2019**  
Families 797  
Individuals 2726

**April 2018**  
Families 766  
Individuals 2632

**Welcome New Volunteers**

**Tammy Black** — Reception  
**Doug Kubert** — Furniture/Pick-up  
**Tina Ludwig** — Clothing  
**Matthew Puckett** — Furniture  
**Daniel Schontz** — Furniture Pick-up  
**Michael Hoerter** — Maintenance, Furniture/Pick-up

**May 2019      Volume 11      Issue 5**

*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:

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## "This is the Day!"

Justin Clinebell was very excited on a recent Saturday when his Mentor, Randy Holden introduced him to Jesus. Justin was so excited, that all he could explain about his decision to follow Jesus was that "This is the day."

Randy was pretty excited too, as tears flowed down his face. He refused a tissue, saying, "These are tears of joy. I want to keep them!" He further explained, "I have been following Jesus for fifty years, and this is the first time I've had the privilege of directly leading someone to a decision to follow Him too."

We know the angels in heaven rejoiced that Saturday as well!

**Mentor Randy Holden and Justin Clinebell, on the day that Justin's name was entered into the Lamb's Book of Life!**



### FIRST FRUITS ARE HARVESTED!



**In March, several families from CrossPointe Church planted a garden of produce to benefit Agape clients. In May, the 'first fruits' have ripened and are now in the hands of our clients!**



### SML Lions Donate to Agape



**Sue Lipscomb, Agape's Executive Director (right), receives a contribution from the SML Lions Club Sunshine Chair, Mandy Martin.**

The Smith Mountain Lake Lions Club has donated \$500 to Agape to support their services to the Community. In presenting the check to Sue Lipscomb, Executive Director, on behalf of the SML Lions, Sunshine Chair, Mandy Martin, said, "I am so proud of the Lions for supporting such an important organization in our community."

WHY I SERVE ...



"I enjoy the work at Agape, and especially the interaction and serving clients from my community."

Alicia Van Vleet,  
Bedford County  
Data  
Volunteer since 2012

**SHOP FOR YOURSELF;  
LET KROGER AND  
AMAZON GIVE TO AGAPE**

Just sign up on your Kroger card, and a portion of all your purchases will be donated to Agape.

Same thing with Amazon—Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and register for Agape Moneta/SML, and a portion of all your purchases will be donated to Agape.

No Muss; No Fuss;  
nothing else for you to do!  
Just Do it Today!



**From The Agape  
Book Shelf**

*The First Gardener*  
By Denise Hildreth Jones

Diane Davis  
Agape Book Reviewer

Governor Gray London and his wife Mackenzie lived in the Governor's mansion in Nashville, Tennessee with their daughter Maddie. Jeremiah Williams tended the beautiful gardens at the mansion. He took Mackenzie a flower every day.

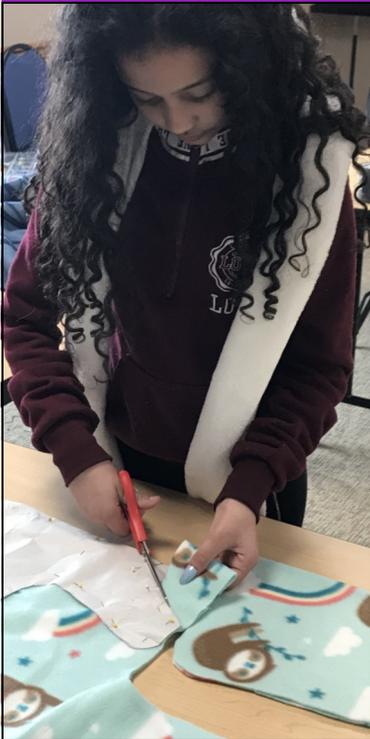
One day Mackenzie and Maddie were in a terrible accident. Maddie was thrown from the car and killed instantly. Mackenzie had broken bones and serious injuries but survived. However, her heart was broken. She blamed herself for not checking Maddie's seat belt to be sure it was fastened properly. She retreated into herself and would let no one enter.

Jeremiah brought Mackenzie an orchid from the garden. When she found out orchids are the Chinese symbol for many children, she became furious. When she confronted Jeremiah, he told her that the orchid was given in love and had been made by God who was the first gardener! He told her that God loved her and Maddie and that God wanted her to live her life.

Finally, she began to feel better and decided to learn to live again. She and Gray became close again. He won re-election as Governor. Jeremiah remained their gardener and friend.

You see, Jeremiah was on a work release program from prison. He had been convicted of a crime he had not committed but could not prove his innocence. He accepted his fate, but thanked God for His grace.

**SEWING DEPARTMENT UP AND HUMMING!**



Above: Symya Diaz is learning cutting skills.  
 Top Center: Kacey Diaz is learning pattern pinning from Kathy Meckley, who has designed baby sleep sacks and girls' sleeveless pillowcase dresses.  
 Top Right: Enriqueta Diaz (the girls' mom) is creating blankets from donated hotel bed covers.  
 Center: A specially-designed Tinker Bell gift basket with matching pillow.  
 Right: Mary Jane Poor is also creating blankets from bed covers.  
 Below Right: MaryBeth Winney and Tarry Novellino work on blanket details.

The Agape building previously housed the Moneta Sewing Factory, a dress sewing manufacturing company, where ladies from the area were employed as seamstresses. Years later, Agape is returning to its roots, in a sense. Seeing a need, and feeling a nudge from the Holy Spirit, Tarri Novellino has stepped out in faith that sewing skills could provide needed items for Agape clients. Tarri, an Agape Mentor and Runner, has expanded her service to the Lord by coordinating sewing opportunities. She says, "We want people to feel loved by God and respected for who they are and how they want to serve God. This sewing program is in God's hands and I am trusting Him to guide us."

Meeting once a month in the Agape Meeting Room, volunteers fill the room with sewing machines, ironing equipment; and the tables make great cutting boards! Using donated fabric, thread and other items, great transformations and specialty baskets are happening every month. Plans are under consideration to expand to knitting, crocheting, and other craft skills for those desiring to learn, and those skilled and desiring to share in the leadership and fellowship.

Agape clients and volunteers who are experienced or what to learn are welcome on the **Third Tuesday of each month from 1-3 pm.** For more information, contact Tarri Novellino by phone or text at 207/672-3412.

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Carolyn Gordon's role with Agape started approximately five years ago, when she took the helm of chairing Agape's involvement in the Charity Home Tour. This is a massive year-round undertaking, involving over one hundred volunteers on the three-day weekend of the home tour, and raising an average of \$20,000 for Agape each year.

Carolyn also devotes her time to the Smith Mountain Lake Rotary Club, having served as Club President, and now serving as President of the local Rotary Foundation. She became involved with Rotary over seven years ago, before retiring from AEP, and was thrilled with their mission: "Service above Self", which fit with her Christian passion as well.

While the Rotary is known for its work to eliminate polio internationally, there is a huge focus on the local community. This year, the SML Rotary Foundation donated approximately \$12,000 in grants, both locally and globally. Grants have been awarded to SML Good Neighbors, Bedford Domestic Violence Coalition, Hope to Walk, Agape (two grants for the Getting Ahead program), Moneta Park Disc Golf, as well as several others. They also support the district Rotary Youth Leadership Award Program (where students are selected from Staunton River High School (SRHS) and Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy (SMLCA) to take part in a weekend leadership event at Virginia Tech) and a scholarship for qualifying students from SRHS, SMLCA and Franklin County High School. Their funding comes from donors and annual fundraisers. Their largest fundraiser, *A-Nite-at-the-Races*, is hosted at the Skelton 4H Center. This year's event will be held on October 19th.



Carolyn says, "The Rotary utilizes a four-way test of the things we think, say and do as our guiding principles: *Is it the truth?; Is it fair to all concerned?; Will it build good-will and better friendships?; and Will it be beneficial to all concerned?* I have found this aligns very well with my personal Christian mission, and, it is a pleasure to serve alongside fellow Rotarians."

For more information about the SML Rotary, contact Carolyn Gordon at [winupcg@gmail.com](mailto:winupcg@gmail.com).

## Opportunities for Agape Volunteers

Two special opportunities to serve are on the horizon for Agape volunteers:

**Joyous Junque**, an annual fund-raiser sponsored by Resurrection Catholic Church, donates all of their proceeds to local charities who participate in the sale. We need Agape volunteers to wear their Agape name tag and help on May 20-24; 27-30. Please contact Karen Jones to sign-up or for more info at: [karen@agapecentersml.org](mailto:karen@agapecentersml.org).

**The Open Table Program** is launching soon, and Agape volunteers (men/women) are invited to participate. It is a weekly, one-hour, year-long commitment to walk along-side a client in a group with several other volunteers, and to help one specific client achieve her goals. For more information, contact Jan Hogle at [tofinishstrong@gmail.com](mailto:tofinishstrong@gmail.com) or 540-814-0643.

## Current Store and Basket Needs



The Agape Store is in need of Boy's clothing sizes 0-20!

The Gift Department is in need of men's toiletries and gift items; garden items (gloves, tools, seeds, etc); beach items; and gift items in general for birthday baskets.

## Equine Assisted Learning!

Several Agape volunteers recently joined Jan Hogle and Amy Carroll at Healing Strides Barn for an Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) event. Both Jan and Amy are certified EAL facilitators; and Agape Mentors. Jan directs the Getting Ahead Program (GA) for Agape clients. The purpose was to pilot a new approach for using EAL with each of Agape's GA participants. Each GA class spends one session at Healing Strides Barn to reinforce the GA principles in a very unique way, using horses as "metaphors" for relationships and issues they are facing.

Jan explained, "EAL is a unique and powerfully effective way to reinforce the principles we teach in the Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World (GA) classes. During the 17-session GA program, we devote one morning to "metaphoric learning" at Healing Strides Barn in Boones Mill, VA. A metaphor is a way of comparing two things so you can understand one of the things better. We use horses to represent something each GA student is working on such as a relationship, a crisis, or a long-term challenge like finding financial stability. The students go into the arena or pasture to interact with horses who are roaming freely. The connection they make between the behavior of the horses and their own unique situations is many times astounding. Then we ask them to work together to build a barrier or obstacle that

represents real-life barriers and get the horses to go over, through or around the barrier.



"Due to the powerful nature of metaphoric learning, clients continue to process their experience long after the event is finished, and are often able to make even more connections. The event at the barn gives them a tangible anchor to refer to as they continue to grow and learn."

Jan continued, "We've used EAL with four of our GA classes so far and have had some really amazing results. But both Amy and I knew we needed to make

these sessions more impactful for GA students. What we learned from our pilot with Agape volunteers will help us to do just that. Plus, the learning that took place for each volunteer was a beautiful thing to see! Amy and I had prayed that God would speak through their experiences with the horses to each individual. And He did!"

Amy Carroll, concluded, "Horses are truly the instructors during an EAL event. They are highly intuitive, live in the moment, have no biases, and act as mirrors to our (human) behavior. The horses become the blank canvas on which clients can paint their own stories and interact with. Jan and I are there simply to help the students make the connections."

### Corny? Or Teaching Moment?

**Pastor Bill Griggs**, Mentor, said, "We were asked to look for some metaphorical pictures/feelings that we may receive while being quiet around the horses. I confessed thinking "this sounds corny". Maybe it was a logical male syndrome that was bubbling up within, but it didn't make much sense at the moment.

"However, as soon as we went out to the pasture, my eyes went to this large, beautiful horse. He was the one that I wanted to go up to, and get to touch and show my kindness towards. But, as I got closer, he walked away.

"I asked God to show me what He would have me to learn. At the same time, another, somewhat shabby looking horse tucked his head under my arm and placed his head on me. The message became clear to my soul: "I can get busy and even caught up into seeking to show favor and affection towards those that are not seeking it, or even desiring it while at the same time missing those around me that need to be loved.



### God Can Use Anything!

**Ginny Harris**, Mentor, observed, "The experience was really so interesting to see how God uses the horses to minister, and then to hear the people in our group share how God spoke with them regarding issues they are facing. God can use anything to speak to us in issues we are dealing with.



## Experiencing God's Rhythms of Grace



Judy Harper, Pantry Director, Pastor Bill Griggs, and Patti Galafaro, Mentors, participated in the pilot program at Healing Strides.

Judy said, "I found the therapy to be quite an emotional and enlightening experience. I am so glad that the Getting Ahead participants have the opportunity to benefit from the kind leaders and gentle horses at Healing Strides!"

### God is My Strength



**Grace Cooper**, Mentor, recounts, "As we ventured into the pasture where four horses were grazing, we were told to pick a horse that we were drawn to. Mine was the largest and, I thought, the prettiest horse. The Holy Spirit reminded me about judging from the outside when God judges the heart. My horse was standing with another similar horse who was a little smaller. It was like he was

guarding and watching over the smaller horse. I thought when I love someone, I try my best to protect them, like

a baby Christian. While petting the larger horse he continued eating and didn't look up. After a while I moved toward a smaller, friendly horse and all of a sudden this big horse was following me and his head was right next to my shoulder. I wondered why he was following me; I'm nobody; I'm nothing. Then the scripture came to mind from Isaiah 30:15, 'In quietness and confidence shall be your strength' and I heard the Holy Spirit whisper you are a leader!"

**Marion Reed**, Mentor, shared her experience, saying, "I was the least likely to have an experience with a horse, due to a childhood fear. But I prayed, and as I stepped in to the corral, the fear was gone. I first was attracted to the strong, beautiful, shiny horse I nicknamed 'Shiny' in my head. One of our exercises was to take a swimming noodle from a pile. Each noodle had a descriptive word, and the noodle I got said "confusion". I didn't think I was confused, but as we were instructed, I helped construct a wall, with the other participants each adding their noodles. Before we finished the 'wall', the horses barged into the pile of noodles, destroying the barrier we had built. Noodles, and noodle pieces, were flying everywhere. They brought down the wall!"

"While we were observing the horses, a shaggy, unbeautiful, unshiny horse came to me and started nuzzling, from my fingertips, up my arm, into my hair. He put his shoulder on my good shoulder, and curved his neck around my neck, finally resting on my recently injured shoulder, with his nose near my heart. After my recent fall, severely injuring my shoulder, I asked God, 'What now?' I'm a widow, eighty-five years old, and what is my future going to be if I am incapacitated in any way? When this horse was around my shoulders, I felt it was Jesus reassuring me, 'I've got you! You are not alone.'



"At the same time, Amy Carroll, the co-facilitator, was thinking she should 'rescue' me from this shaggy, unshiny horse. But the Holy Spirit held her back, and she did not attempt to rescue me. By not interrupting this reassurance from Jesus, my concern about age and ability has been vanquished by this experience.

"Jesus says, in *The Message*, 'Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.' (Matthew 11:28-30)

"I later learned the name of the shiny horse was 'Rhythm', an apt closure to an amazing experience with my Lord. My Father placed His Yoke on me, joining together with Him to let me know my future is in His hands. He said, 'Trust me, Daughter.' It is awesome He used a horse to reveal this to me. So the word confusion, is torn down. His angels will keep me from stumbling, and I chose to believe His word."

I had to come in . . . So my grandbaby is with me!



Mike Matrongola is a dedicated volunteer at Agape, working in Furniture and also taking home bikes to repair and prepare for new owners. Recently, the Furniture Department was desperate for volunteers, so he came in with his two month-old granddaughter.

He just had one question: "If I need help, is there someone here at Agape who knows about babies?" With so many female volunteers, he had no trouble finding a willing 'sitter' in Karen Fusaro, Director of the Gift Department (left).



Mike with Shae-lyn (center), and her parents, Mike Jr and Ashlyn.

Mike Burzynski Named to Agape Board

Mike Burzynski is passionate about Jesus, saying, "I serve at Agape because being able to share the Gospel is the distinctive difference between Agape and many other good organizations in the area." Having been an Agape volunteer for a little over a year, he has recently been elected to serve a three-year term on Agape's Board of Directors. He is also a Mentor and Director of Furniture Pick-Up.

Mike first heard about Agape through a class he and his wife, Leslie, teach at Cross-Pointe Church in Wirtz. Through that class, about six other individuals have become volunteers at Agape as well. He says, "if you don't ask, you don't receive, so we asked for people to consider and pray about serving the community and God has directed them to this ministry."

Mike and his family owned moving and storage businesses throughout the Mid-Atlantic states, and recently sold them in order to become more involved in ministry. He and Leslie have two daughters, one in Maryland and one in South Carolina.

He says, "God's sense of humor showed up because after we retired, I thought I was done with furniture and storage. He put me here at Agape, where I am again involved in furniture and storage!"

Asking is an important element to everything Mike does, and as a result, he has seen several of his clients either turn, or return, to a life focused on Jesus and following the Lord, which is the mission of Agape.



As a result of his business background, he keeps things simple, using common sense. He recalls, "When we were in business, we made decisions based on whether it was good for the customer and if it served the needs of the customer, it would be good for our business. It is that same approach I bring to the Agape Board: if it serves the client well, it will be successful for the organization. I think in terms of the experience each client will encounter here: how we treat them, do they come first, and do they feel significant to us?"

Mike and Leslie, who also serves at Agape as Director of Clothing, have a background in premarital, marital, and family counseling, and have served in many roles within their church throughout the years. He says, "we just tried to plug in wherever help was needed, and that is the same attitude we have brought to Agape. I am happy to serve on the Board and share my perspective in order to help make our organization even more effective."

Mike traveled to Burma on his first mission trip in 2018. He said, "We served in the feeding program among the most impoverished people and we also ministered in a maximum-security prison, sharing nutritious food and the Gospel with literally hundreds of prisoners. It was significant that a government-run facility in a Buddhist country allowed Christians to serve their prisoners in this way. Through both of these avenues, many came to Christ and are being followed up by the local church."