



Where Needs Meet AGAPE Love

August 2017

September is Volunteer Month

AGAPE MEMBER CHURCHES

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- 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

Please 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 — August 24  
Tuesday—September 12  
Thursday—September 28



Sue Lipscomb, Executive Director

SEPTEMBER IS VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT MONTH  
By Sue Lipscomb

I am constantly in awe of the team of volunteers that our Lord has brought together to serve Him at the Agape Center. Agape volunteers come from over 35 churches and from every walk of life. It never ceases to amaze me how specific job's at Agape are filled in a timely manner with someone who is perfect for the opening.

Agape volunteers work hard and are so faithful. It is indeed a joy to volunteer at a place where there is such unity and everyone seems to be having a great time.

During the month of September we are asking each of our volunteers to share the good news of the Agape Center and to bring a friend to Agape for a tour and to see what it is like to be a part of this exciting ministry. We currently have openings in most of our departments, so there is a place for everyone to serve.

If you would like to bring a friend to take the tour and see what Agape is all about, please contact me at [Agapecentersml@aol.com](mailto:Agapecentersml@aol.com).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

September Volunteer Recruitment Month! Bring a friend for the experience!

Agape Autumn Schedule Changes

September: Open the 2nd and 3rd Saturdays-September 9 and 16  
October: Open the 2nd and 4th Saturdays-October 14 and 18

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

October 6-8 — Charity Home Tour—Sign up in Sue's office

October 9—December 4— Getting Ahead program

October 21—Running for the Children—Save the Date

## Agape Client/Volunteer Graduates from Virginia Western; will complete her BA at Roanoke College



**Bailey Ratliff graduated in June, 2017 with her AS degree from Virginia Western.**

Bailey Ratliff is in a good place now! She just graduated from Virginia Western Community College with her Associate of Science degree. She is enrolled in Roanoke College and will graduate with her Bachelor’s degree in December, 2018. Bailey has been a client and a volunteer at Agape for about a year, and says, “I like the feeling at the end of the day that you know you legitimately have met needs of people throughout the day and they wouldn’t have been met if we weren’t there. In retail (where I worked in a drug store as head cashier and certified photo technician) you help people find something or make a purchase, but it is not always something that they need, that they have to have. At Agape, you know you are helping people eat, or have basic products for their home that they might not otherwise be able to get.”

But Bailey has been through a long period of suffering. She lived a fairly ordinary life through high school and enrolled in college. In her senior year at Roanoke College, she began experiencing unusual symptoms...brain fog, lack of understanding of basic things. She began a ten-year journey to find the solution. First diagnosed with ADD, Bailey was put on medications that didn’t alleviate the symptoms and in fact, produced other problems. The College was very accommodating, providing extra time for exams and a note-taker in her classes. However, at the end of her semester, she had to go on a medical leave, unable to continue classes. They kept her on medical leave for ten years, as she attempted to regain her life. She also could no

longer work, and eventually qualified for disability support.

In 2015, her life took a nose-dive when she was diagnosed with other medical issues and ended up in the hospital several times; she begged to be admitted to the psychiatric unit. There she finally received the relief she needed: she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, put on different medications, and began to see light at the end of the long tunnel she had been in. The periods of severe mood swings, from elevated enthusiasm and optimism to deep depression, as well as the brain fog, were alleviated. *(Continued page 6—College Graduate)*

### By the Numbers Served. . .

**July, 2017**  
Families 788  
Individuals 2653

**July, 2016**  
Families 797  
Individuals 2657

### Welcome New Volunteers

Michael Lamberson — Furniture, Pantry  
Sonya Lamberson — Data  
Frank Nikić — Furniture, Transportation, Intake  
Charlie Scruggs — USDA

### August 2017 Volume 8 Issue 8

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## God's Better Plan Included a New House



**Susanne Connors with two of her three children, Alexis, 10, and Carmelo, 9. Sean, 7, is not pictured.**

Susanne Connors didn't have an easy life, but it was stable—predictable. She described her life: "I had a job I loved, working in a hospital for 24 years; I had many friends and an enjoyable social life; I had a schedule; I was active in my church; and even though my house was full of teens for several years, they were pretty independent." All of that changed in 2012 when her daughter died unexpectedly of pulmonary emboli, leaving three small children behind. Her daughter's husband was in prison, and Susanne responded to the need to care for her three grandchildren.

She took early retirement and began parenting again, after having raised a foster son, and four children of her own. She says, "I was struggling. Costs of living in New Jersey, where I had grown up, were beyond my means; my apartment for one wasn't accommodating three rambunctious children, each of whom had special needs in addition to losing both of their parents."

Susanne continued, "My pastor (in New Jersey) was very insightful regarding my plight, and connected me with some former parishioners who had moved to Moneta. He suggested a fresh start might be good for everyone. These new friends found a place to rent that I could afford and outfitted the home with all the things we would need. I moved here sight unseen. Moving wasn't my plan, but God had a different, better plan for us."

So in 2014, Susanne and her kids (she was granted custody of them) moved to the lake area, the first of three moves in next two and a half years. By now, her credit was shot, she needed more assistance than she ever thought she would need, and her adult son died, leaving her with two deceased adult children. The children each have special needs and learning problems, combined with the loss of both parents and several moves away from their home in New Jersey.

While Susanne trusted God, she was feeling more and more unstable, and turned to Agape to help with food, clothing, spiritual and emotional support. (*Continued page 4—God's Plan*)

## God Provides — A Ton of Milk!

Milk – It does a body good . . . If you can afford it!

Children need it . . . but many must go without it. Did you know that food banks don't normally receive milk? According to the Gleaning for the World website, all across Central Virginia, there is one thing children desperately need in their refrigerators – milk. It is the most requested item in food banks across the US because of its powerful nutritional benefits. But it is rarely donated.

For low income families, milk is not an option. The cost of milk is 62% higher in Central Virginia than the national average, while the average income in this region is 23% below the national average. Gleaning for the World works to supply milk to food banks in this region.

Gordy Harper delivered this unexpected treat for Agape clients—Milk! Formerly an Agape pantry worker, Gordy is now Director of Food for Families at Park View Community Mission in Lynchburg. He was made aware of the milk from Gleaning for the World and offered to get a load for Agape as well as his own food bank. He picked up the milk, a pallet of bottled water, and several cases of peanut butter, and delivered them to Agape. The milk weighed over one ton (2000 pounds), with enough to distribute to approximately 500 clients!



**God provided the milk—Gordy Harper delivered it!**

### God's Plan—Susanne Connor's New House

*(Continued from page 3)*

In the spring of 2017, Susanne was accepted into Agape's Getting Ahead Program, which helps clients identify resources to help them change their situation. Her main goal, identified through the sixteen weeks of classes, was her desire for stability.

By now she had qualified for scholarships for her kids to attend Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy, and she was volunteering at Agape which gave her a little more of a schedule for herself. She says, "Sometimes it feels like I have so much to do at home, but when I get to Agape, the love is poured out around me. I work with qualifying clients and also on the phones. I have so many friends at Agape, and I know I am making a difference in the lives of others...as well as in my own life."

"As a result of the Getting Ahead Program, I began researching Bedford's Habitat for Humanity, and applied in March of 2017. By May, I had qualified and began working toward the two hundred hours that are required of recipients of Habitat homes.

Many from my church (EastLake Community) helped me achieve the required hours. In addition, the

Ironmen (men's ministry) helped me move—twice. I am just blessed beyond blessing; my church family has been so supportive in practical ways to welcome the kids and me to this community, I can't thank God enough for placing me here."

She moved into her new house in July, quickly turning it into a home with pictures on the walls and plants (donated and planted by friends from New Jersey). The neighbors welcomed her family with homemade bread and a very kind note of welcome. The kids are enjoying living in a town (rather than a rural area).

*"I can't thank God  
enough  
for placing me here."*

Carmelo, who is nine, says, "I like having sidewalks to ride bikes, walking to the Library and getting books, and the sounds of the trains." Alexis, who is ten, says, "I like being close to things, like we were in New Jersey, but I like it better because there are not so many cars."

Susanne echoes each of their favorites, and adds, "I am really glad they can play outside here. The cost of living in this home is less than I was paying in rent, and it feels good to be a part of a community. My pastor in New Jersey had suggested a new start, and finally, I feel like I'm able to enjoy this new start and am in a much better place, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. I am so blessed by my friends at EastLake Community Church, and the Agape Center. They are the best."

## Phase Two Building Project Underway



**Jeff Mangold, Director of Acquisitions at Agape, is temporarily wearing additional hats as he oversees the building enhancement project.**

Jeff Mangold is wearing many hats these days—hard hats that is. He is the Project Director for ‘building enhancement’, renovation/refurbishing of the original Agape building. Jeff says, “My goal is to create work space that is healthy, safe, well-lit, and comfortable for our volunteers with good indoor air quality.”

Now that the Furniture Department has been relocated to the new Annex, the old space is being thoroughly cleaned, painted, and new LED lighting will be installed. The old insulation is being removed, revealing fresh, new, industrial-strength insulation; the drywall

has been patched, and the red iron beams and walls are being painted. New shelving is coming. A walk-in freezer will be built immediately beside the Pantry, but most of the remaining space will house Intake, Clothing, House wares, and Books. A new Intake entrance will be constructed next to the garage door, and an awning will be installed with a designated Intake section for donated items. This area should be ready for relocation by September 1.

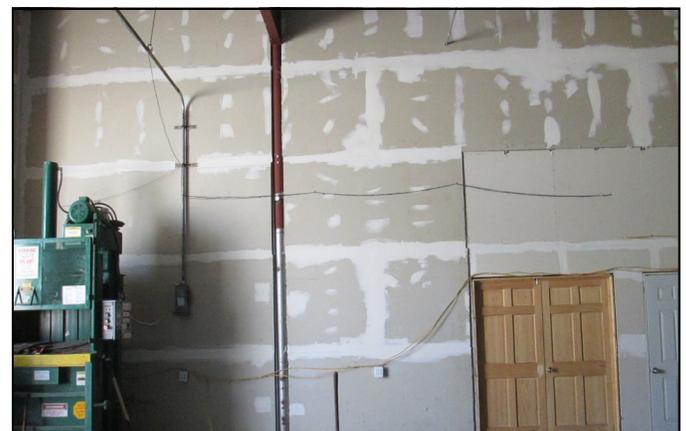
He describes the project: “We will also be refurbishing the outside of the building, stripping the old paint, replacing gutters, concrete work where necessary, and repainting the entire building. The concrete slab will be poured for the new Storage Shop, which will house the bicycle repair shop and outdoor tools (mowers, etc). We are moving forward as quickly as we can, and I’m excited to be a part of this effort.”

Jeff, who has a full-time day job, is putting in long hours to oversee the building enhancement. He says, “This is my niche. I am very blessed to be with this group of people who are all here for the right reasons.”

**J Leftwich started with Agape volunteering his labor as he poured concrete for the Annex entrance. Now he is providing the bulk of the work for Phase Two through his company, J-Works.**



**The entire look of the warehouse area is being brightened with the red iron beams painted white to lighten the area, new LED lights which are at least five times more energy efficient, and freshly painted walls.**



**Once the mud is applied to the sections of drywall, the walls will be painted throughout the facility. A walk-in freezer will be built in this space between the compactor and double-doors to the Pantry.**



## Meet Agape's Charity Home Tour Team

Each year, the Smith Mountain Lake Charity Home Tour selects charities which will participate and receive funds from the Lake's biggest event of the year. Each charity is assigned a home which will be on display during the three-day event, October 6-8 this year, and the charity selects a team of volunteers who will work with that homeowner to prepare, staff, and guide the tours.

Carolyn Gordon is Agape's Team Leader for this year's Charity Home Tour (CHT). She has been working behind the scenes for months with the members of her team who are recruiting volunteers, preparing logistics for the actual tour, parking and docking at the home assigned to Agape, and participating in the publicity for the event.

She got involved with this annual fundraiser several years ago, beginning as a co-host for the Agape home. This is her third year leading the team. She says, "Many of the homes undergo massive renovation, remodeling, updating, painting, and preparation for the CHT, so homes are selected nearly a year in advance."

This year's Agape Team includes: Chief Hostess Jan Hogle; Co-Hostess Judy Harper and Betty Ann Allen; Expeditors Greg and Moira Bell; Traffic Captain Bob Winters, assisted by co-Captains Ronnie Gordon, Docking and Parking, Steve Wisotzkey; Sponsorship Lead, Kris McKenzie and Advisor, Phyllis Johnson; Volunteer Recruiters Carol Moyer and Linda Leedy; and Poster Distribution Bonnie Fiori.

Carolyn says, "I enjoy administration, organization, and coordination and this project uses a lot of these skills. I love working with people. The fact that this community event is fun, very rewarding personally, and makes a lot of money for Agape motivates me. I enjoy working on projects which have a beginning and an end, and I feel that God has equipped me and placed me with Agape for this specific purpose."



Carolyn Gordon leads the Agape Team for the Charity Home Tour this year.

### College Graduate — Bailey Ratliff *(Continued from page 2)*

It was also this time that she returned to her childhood faith in Jesus Christ. She had accepted Christ as a young girl, periodically attending church with grandparents and high school friends.

She says, "When I was finally diagnosed, I was in the hospital for a long time. Not one of my 'friends' visited me, but many of my mom's friends repeatedly visited and encouraged me. When it really mattered in my life, I realized that the only people who really cared about me were Christians. I relied on God during this time and cling to what I had around me. I watched sermons from my hospital bed, and from that vantage point, I realized I wanted to become a part of a church. I came to EastLake Community Church because that was my mom's church and where many of her friends were." She is now on the tech team for Celebrate Recovery, where she is also has qualified as a substitute leader.

Bailey is now on track to complete her studies at Roanoke College to get her degree in sociology. Her hope is to eventually get her Master's degree and become a mental health counselor.

*I like to see people's faith in action; that is so encouraging to me - to see God working through ordinary people!"*

At Agape, Bailey has done virtually every job but has finally settled on working in the store and with the USDA program, where she interviews clients. She says, "doing USDA, I see the personal circumstances of our clients, and though I also am low-income, I have family and a support system that helps me and I am grateful for. A lot of the poverty is not anyone's fault - a lot of people are truly disabled. I love Agape! I look forward to going to Agape. I like to see people's faith in action; that is so encouraging to me - to see God working through ordinary people!"

## School Supplies Distributed to Agape Children



Iris Mills, who co-chaired the School Supply project with Monica Berger, is passionate about children, and especially giving them every opportunity to start their school year off well. A former teacher, she says, "It is so important that students enter their new classes excited about the new year, the new teacher, and to come prepared with the supplies needed to help them make a good start." To assure that the children of Agape's clients were well-supplied, Iris and Monica spent hours, shopping and lugging boxes full of paper, folders, pens, pencils and other supplies so that volunteers could then put them into the packets. Overall there were approximately eight individuals who helped with this project! Packets are being distributed through the month of August.

**Iris Mills (right) brought a couple of ladies from her Bible study to help pack school supplies children of Agape clients. Shirley Pustelak (left) and Jan Mortvedt (center) prepared nearly 100 packets in less than two hours!**



**From The Agape Book Shelf**

*Shattered Dreams*  
Larry Crabb

**Diane Davis**  
Agape Book Reviewer

The book, *Shattered Dreams* by Larry Crabb, addresses the question every Christian has asked: "Why me?" or "Why Lord?" When Jesus cried from the cross, "It is finished", God invited us to feel His embrace in a different way. It became so much more personal.

God wants to bless us, but it is now the blessed of an encounter with God. God sent His Son to die for our sins!

Our shattered dreams of a painless life were never promised to be answered. The flesh demands a trouble-free life, but God has a different plan. He leads us through the trials, but what is promised in heaven is not promised now.

The Bible tells of many saints of the Lord who were not delivered from their pain and suffering. Even Jesus had to suffer with the sins for the world. Yet, He was raised from the

dead and ascended to Heaven.

That is God's plan for us. Through our trials here on earth we must remain true to Him, rely on Him, put our trust in Him and Him only. He will continue to be with us, give us strength to endure, and lead us to a more perfect joy in Him. We must leave behind our flesh and keep focused on our Lord.

Crabb summarizes "Our deepest desire is for a kind of life only mercy makes possible, only grace provides. It is life from God, life with God, and life for God."

Editor's note: All books reviewed by DD are available for volunteers to read from the Book Department.

### Time For Kroger Renewal!

**VOLUNTEERS**—For all your purchases at Kroger, Kroger will donate a portion of your total purchase price...you do nothing, except go on-line and designate the Agape Center SML as the charity you would like as the recipient. This renewal must be made each year, or it is dropped from the Kroger program. Please sign—up, or renew, to have your dollars count for the Kingdom in this region!

### Runners Needed to 'Step Out for the Lord!'

Whatever your age, we can use more runners every time Agape is open! According to Teresa McCain, Director of the Runner Department, "young feet are very helpful, especially 'running' requests to the Furniture pick-up drop-box. Our department is seeking more young runners, especially during the fall months leading up to Christmas. As Agape gets busier, the runners also get busier and younger people can help in keeping the gift shop stocked as well as routine requests." If you are involved with kids, whether home school coop, community service requirements from schools, or youth groups, groups are especially needed. Contact Teresa at 703/915-2976 or [tgmccain@gmail.com](mailto:tgmccain@gmail.com).

Isaac Arthur was the Runner Assistant, working with Teresa McCain, Director of the Runner Department. He is in the fourth grade.



### Getting Ahead Gearing Up: Volunteers Needed

Are you aware that many of Agape's clients live moment to moment? No planning or dreaming of the future, but simply dealing with the crisis of the day, whether it be a child needing to come home from school sick and no transportation, or the threat of electricity being turned off. The Getting Ahead Program (GAP) is accepting applications during the month of August. In September, the participants will be selected for the 16 week program, and it will run from October 9 through December 4.

The GAP has been successful helping many of our clients as it focuses on providing a safe place where Getting Ahead tools and concepts are discovered and practiced. The Gospel message is presented and participants are encouraged to seek God's direction in their lives. In addition to those involved directly in facilitating the program, help is needed to provide breakfast and childcare for each class. If you can help on a Monday or Wednesday, either coming for about an hour to bring and serve breakfast, or for three hours to provide childcare, please contact Food Coordinator Linda Leedy ([lindarleedy@outlook.com](mailto:lindarleedy@outlook.com)) or Childcare Coordinator Debbie Cocrane ([dcocrane@gmail.com](mailto:dcocrane@gmail.com)).



SATURDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2017 @9AM

## RUN FOR THE CHILDREN 5K

AGAPE CENTER IN MONETA, VA

COST: \$30

Volunteers are needed to help with the 5K — contact Randy Quay at (540) 297-3251 or to register to run/walk, go to [agapecentersml@aol.com](mailto:agapecentersml@aol.com).