



Where Needs Meet AGAPE Love

April 2018

Agape Center – Lynchburg

On The Horizon!

AGAPE MEMBER CHURCHES

- Bedrock Community Church
- Bedrock Church Franklin County
- 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 the Agape ministry, clients, and volunteers! Join the Agape Prayer Team in the Meeting Center at

- 8:45 to 9:45 am**
- Tuesday — April 10**
- Thursday — April 26**
- Tuesday — May 8**
- Thursday — May 24**

The Agape Center – Lynchburg is in the final planning stages. Tabitha North is the founder and Executive Director. The Agape Center is modeled after the Agape Center in Moneta and will be operated under its Board of Directors as a daughter organization.

Tabitha North and her extended family have been praying about this for years, though they didn't really know how God would direct. She shared, "My husband, Brian, and my mom and two sisters and their husbands and all our boys have been praying for several years how to serve share God's love in our community. I was serving in our church, Blue Ridge Community Church in Forest, as a small group leader for fifth grade girls, and also discipling this same age group. However, we were looking for a way to add value in our community as an extended family.

"Then God confirmed our prayers with His concern for those in need from 1 John 3:17-18 If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."



Tabitha North, Executive Director of Agape Center-Lynchburg

See **AGAPE CENTER—LYNCHBURG, 7**

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

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

April 13 or 14— Mentor Training — 9:30 am—12 noon

April 20 —Getting Ahead Graduation (See Page 4)

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

Client Pursues New Career: Graduating in June

Matthew McClintic is a changed man from when he started coming to Agape five years ago. He heard Agape was a helping agency, and “every month I was short of money. Furthermore, I was depressed and very angry. I couldn’t seem to get over anger and depression by myself. Matthew saw mentor Ken Swain most of the time and says, “he has been a huge encouragement to me. Each time Ken prayed for me, I felt myself getting stronger. I learned to pray between meetings, and again, God seemed to be reducing my anger.”

Ken helped me overcome problems in my marriage; the mentors taught me to forgive and to accept myself. It was as if saying it made it happen, and the more I acknowledged my problems, and my desire for God to take them from me, the more He has answered my prayers.”

Ken remembers mentoring Matthew over the years, and says, “I am so proud of Matthew. He has entrusted his life to God, and God has honored Matthew by first taking away the anger, and secondly, by setting him on a path that will bring joy and fulfillment for a lifetime.”

Matthew had worked as a caregiver for a couple in Boones Mill and discovered the enjoyment he got from helping people. “That’s how I realized I didn’t want to be sitting on disability the rest of my life. God opened doors, and I went to ECPI in Roanoke; I will graduate with my Medical Assistant Associate Degree in June, 2018. Then I will take the national certification test. I am really excited about the things I’ve learned to do and to be capable of working in the medical field. I know God will provide the job that will be rewarding for me.”

In addition to being a full-time dad to his daughter, Savannah, Matthew works part-time at Walmart in Rocky Mount. He really enjoys dealing with the public and hopes that his smile and good attitude will make them leave Walmart feeling better.

Matthew has also gotten involved in CrossPointe Church and especially enjoys the men’s group. He says, “My main message is to forgive because God forgives and I am learning this all the time.”



Matthew McClintic will graduate in the medical field in June .

April 2018 Volume 10 Issue 4

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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Welcome New Volunteers

March 2018
 Families 795
 Individuals 2618

March 2017
 Families 792
 Individuals 2574

Welcome New Volunteers

- Susie Graham** — Store/Clothing
- Lamar Laing** — Furniture
- Al Lorent** — Furniture
- Neil Marsh** — Electronics/Mentor
- Glenn Rebman** — Furniture/Mentor
- Mary Alice Rebman** — Data Assistant
- Stephen Williamson, Jr** — Furniture

God Has Always Been There For Me!

Lynn Williams, an Agape client, has had many tragedies in her life, starting with being born into an alcoholic family. When she was five, she was in a car accident, where her mother and sister were killed by a drunk driver, but she was pushed out of the car and survived. She then was placed in eighteen foster homes and finally adopted by a Godly woman who introduced her to Jesus. They attended church frequently, and she learned at a young age to trust Jesus.

Last February, her trailer was burned and she sustained injuries, lost her clothing and her belongings. But again, through this most recent tragedy, she says, “through every tragedy in my life, God has never left my side. Now that I am older, I rely on Him even more, because He has been so faithful. When I lean on my own strength, I know I will fall, but He always picks me up.”

She worships at Goodview Baptist Church, one of Agape’s Member Churches, and says, “The agape center has been a blessing to me. I thank everyone who has been there for me, and so many others.”



Lynn Williams survived a recent house fire.

From The Agape Book Shelf

A Time to Dance

By Karen Kingbury



Diane Davis
Agape Book Reviewer

John and Abby Reynolds had been married twenty-one years and seemed to be the perfect couple. However, John’s career and Abby’s raising their children had stolen their time together. They had drifted apart.

When Abby caught John kissing Charlene, a worker at the school where John taught, her anger and bitterness grew toward John. John told her it was an innocent mistake, but continued to play along with Charlene. While this was going on, Abby began chatting with a man on the internet. A divorce was imminent!

They decided to tell their family after their daughter’s wedding. Charlene became more demanding and John began having doubts and guilt over his actions. Abby also recognized her guilt for what she was doing.

At their daughter’s wedding, John looked at his wife and realized that he loved her and wanted only her. He followed Abby to the pier behind the house where they used to spend their moments alone and dance. It was their special place.

As they talked about their years together, they remembered the love they had for each other. They both promised to let go of other distractions in their lives and focus on each other as God had planned. As they shared a special dance they thanked God for bringing them back to where they should be: together.

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens”. . . A time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4

PRAYER NEEDED!

No matter where you work in Agape, we need YOU!

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GAP Participants Interact with Horses; Prepare for Graduation

Recently, six of the members of the current Getting Ahead Program (GAP) visited the Healing Strides Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) program on a ranch in Boones Mill. Amy Carroll, an Agape mentor and Jan Hogle, Mentor Administrator and GAP Facilitator, reminded the group that they will continue their experiences in metaphoric learning and prepared them for the morning's experience. Both Amy and Jan are certified as EAL facilitators, and Amy is also a professional mental health specialist. Carol Young, executive director of Healing Strides, explained to the group that "the horses allow humans to enter their herd. The horses are social creatures and are intuitive in sensing the feelings of the humans close to them. If they sense the human is afraid or distant, the horse will distance itself from the person. If they sense acceptance, they will come close and seek greater connection."

Each of the participants spent time interacting with the horses, debriefed and enjoyed lunch. Mark and Lin Plumb are this class's facilitators. In the debriefing, Neva Owens observed that one of the horses responded similarly to her personality, "Where I am in the middle, helping, sometimes pushing, others to move forward just as the horse seemed to do." Terrie Edwards noted that she felt a sense of freedom in the arena. She also acknowledged her creative problem-solving skills were present in the arena, where "if it doesn't work at first, I try something else." They all agreed that the first step, standing outside the arena, observing the horses, was the best approach to addressing life's issues. Once the situation was assessed, their responses were more appropriate to the horses and the horses responded with affection in return.

This GAP class will finish on April 18, and then celebrate with their graduation on April 20.

Volunteers are Invited to
The GAP Graduation
Friday, April 20, at 6:30 pm
EastLake Community
Church—Chapel
Refreshments will be
served



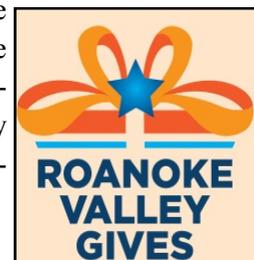
GAP Participant Terri Edwards in the arena.

THANK YOU! Agape Tops Goal to Raise Funds for Refrigeration Unit!

Friends of Agape donated \$16,220 to purchase the new refrigeration unit for the expanded produce program! It was Agape's first time to participate in the four-year old Roanoke Valley Gives Fundraising Campaign on March 14. Rick Cocrane coordinated Agape's participation in the campaign and says, "Thanks to all Agape supporters for enabling us to expand and modernize our food pantry. We had a great showing in our first year in this fundraiser."

The organization finished in seventh place among all 120 charities. Its goal to raise \$15,000 for the new refrigeration unit was surpassed, with Agape coming in first place among 47 non-profits in the small charity category,

thereby winning an additional \$5000 incentive prize. Judy Harper, Pantry Director, added, "The expanded refrigeration capacity was required because Agape has been selected to participate in the new produce program of Feeding American Southwest Virginia. We appreciate all of the donors who gave funds to help us update the refrigeration and expand the storage capacity in the Pantry!! God continues to provide through His people!"



For Such A Time As This

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Dave and Diane Davis are faithful volunteers every week in the Clothing Department, hanging and sorting clothes. But Tuesday afternoons will find them at Dudley Elementary School, where they are passionate to bring Jesus to the Good News Club after school. Diane is so disappointed if the Club is cancelled for any reason, but never fear, she is also busy teaching children's Sunday School every week at her church, Westlake Baptist. The Davises are truly servants of God, at Agape & Beyond.



Agape volunteers Verne (Pantry) and Karen (Floor Supervisor, communications director) Baker recently followed God's direction to go to Jordan to minister among the refugees from other parts of the Middle East. This was their third trip, but this time they went without a game plan. Karen explains, "We simply put this time into God's hands to see how He would use us. When we initiated the trip, we were completely open to serve and encourage the workers there however we could."

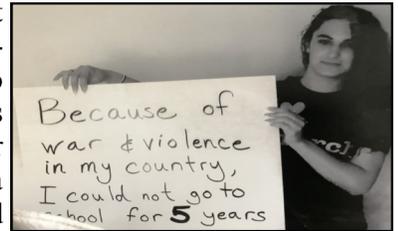
Karen's primary assignment was to interview refugees so they could be 'adopted' by Americans who would support them with prayers and finances until placement in their new country. Verne's assignment came about because of his recent trip to Honduras with Hope to Walk (HTW), and the desire to find ways the prosthetic legs could be manufactured and provided through other ministries around the world. The founders of HTW had only one condition: Individuals in these poverty-stricken countries cannot be charged for the legs.

Karen had the privilege of meeting with fifteen families who shared their stories of fear and loss of everything to get to a safe place. These stories are the basis for the refugee sponsorship program and can be found at www.gpartners.org.

Verne's effort was equally fruitful as he discovered an Evangelical church that had a vision of providing employment and assistance to refugees in ways similar to how Agape provides for the poor in our community. Marka Church had established several programs to train refugees in sewing, carpentry, jewelry-making, and a rehabilitation clinic.



Karen's retelling of the story of God asking Adam and Eve, "Where are you?" prompted discussion among three Muslim women and their 22 children about God's love for the entire world.



The Marka Church offers education for refugees, as the Jordanian government does not provide either education or health care for refugees while they are awaiting their assigned country.

See JORDAN, 6

Interior Finishing Continues



Agape's interior remodeling continues, with the new Intake Department relocated near the Pantry (top left), the Shoe Closet (middle left), and the additional Mentor Offices (lower left). Below is the flowering cherry blossoms planted in memoriam for Amy, Jack and Sue Lipscomb's daughter.



JORDAN: REFUGEES WILL PLAY A PART IN LEG PROSTHESES FROM 5

And, the pastor had a vision of expanding the programs as God opened doors. Pastor Haythum was drawn to the concept of manufacturing the prosthetic legs in a new program, and then having the rehab staff offer the legs to the refugee community. Verne says, "God brought all of these concepts together for such a time as this, and we had the blessing of watching it unfold before our eyes."



Left: A mosaic of the symbols of Christian persecution, made in the Marka Church mosaic shop. The cross of Jesus, the fish of first century Christians, and the Arabic letter "n", which identifies followers of the Nazarene. When ISIS places the "n" on their homes, the symbol identifies the home for burning and its inhabitants for execution.

AGAPE CENTER—LYNCHBURG: “God invited us into this ministry”

FROM 1

This affirmation spurred us on, as we continued seeking His direction. We didn't know how to do this, or where to start. In fact, we didn't think we even knew anyone in need. However, I was contacted by a friend on FaceBook to help a family in need: a single mom with three children under 5 years old. Our family took it upon ourselves to help this family, going to yard sales, collecting items from friends, shopping for sales. When I posted this need on FB, we had an unbelievable response – help with groceries, school supplies, and even grocery gift cards. We realized this was God's path for us, as more needs were presenting themselves to us.”

So they cleaned out their basement and became a donation site so that when needs arose, the items would be on hand, rather than seeking them every time a need presented itself. Her boys, thirteen and nine years old, got involved as they took the donations downstairs, and then brought them up as needed.

Tabitha says, “When God invited us into this ministry, I was not at all equipped to do this type of work. There are many ministries and helping organizations in Lynchburg, but they are targeted to specific needs (such as recovering addictions, prison ministries, etc) and are not suitable for family involvement. I knew, from the responses we were getting, that there were many people in our area who wanted to serve, but needed a way to do that which included their families and was suited to their skills and availability.”

Along the way, Tabitha discovered there was a twenty-one percent poverty level in Lynchburg, and she also discovered a homeless ministry to help people come out of homelessness. Rick Hughes provides this service, single-handedly, and one of the things he does is provide furniture to families who have escaped abuse, moving into a permanent home. That is a need Tabitha and her family were facing, but they were not in a position to deal with furniture, so they linked up with Warm Streets Ministry and Rick Hughes. His connection with those in need is well-known among the community, so he began referring people to us for the things he didn't provide. Tabitha couldn't keep up with the needs, so she began posting needs for her 600 followers on FaceBook and people began dropping items off at her home. She also has a cadre of 16 women who make deliveries and about 24 women who help clean and sort the donations in her basement.

Then someone suggested she check out the Agape Cen-

ter in Moneta, serving the Smith Mountain Lake Counties of Bedford and Franklin. After meeting with Executive Director, Sue Lipscomb, Tabitha saw the vision God had been preparing her to pursue. The Moneta Agape serves over 2800 individuals in an average month, with over 300 volunteers. However, Lynchburg is not rural, so both Sue and Tabitha recognized that the Lynchburg Agape would need to be tailored to the community.

Tabitha has been in training with Sue, and then recruited a core group of volunteers who are committed to helping the Lynchburg site become operational. These twelve women and three men have been in training for several months, learning every department and every role within the Moneta organization. She says, “We are basically providing the services but without a building. That is the next step for us. We need a building that is large enough for storage of large and small items, and will include a food pantry, so refrigeration will be required. We will provide spiritual mentoring for every client, so individual mentoring rooms will be needed, and of course, we will need the strong support of volunteers and donors from the



**Tabitha North, Executive Director
of the Agape Center—Lynchburg**

community. We are currently working on connecting with the churches in Lynchburg and Forest who will provide our church network. We are focused on having volunteers who are ready to hit the ground running, so the training at the Moneta site is extremely crucial. We don't want to reinvent the wheel, so the only way to do it well is to learn from the experiences in Moneta, so we can focus and concentrate on loving and serving the people. We want our volunteers to be excited about this.”

She concludes, “My passion is to see where God leads us. I want to invite others to join in this exciting venture, to give them a meaningful way to serve and to live out their Christian faith. When God calls us to something, it is a process. I don't want to get comfortable doing the “good things” but to be willing to move in whatever direction He calls me. I know He will equip me as we go along, as He already has I the past couple of years, bringing this germ of an idea to serve our community to the place that we are today.”

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? 1 John 3:17-18