

Where Needs Meet Love

August, 2016

In Memorial Amy Rene Lipscomb

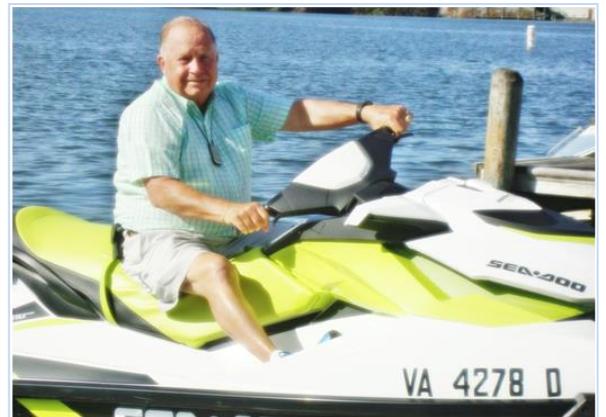


The Agape family extends our sincere condolences to Sue and Jack Lipscomb, who lost their daughter to a twelve year battle with brain cancer on August 12, 2016. Amy Rene Lipscomb (Fuller) Krahl was a teacher, a system administrator for UPS, and then a stay-at-home mom to her two youngest children. She was 48 years old, and is survived by her husband, Dave, her adult sons Asten and Garrett Fuller, her son Nicholas and her daughter Alexandra, in addition to many other family and friends. Her favorite flowers were Gerber daisies and her favorite charity was St Jude Children's Research Hospital. A visitation will be held on Thursday, August 18, 2016 from 5-7 PM, and a memorial service will be held Saturday, August 20, 2016 at 11 AM at Grace Fellowship, 74 East Forrest Ave. Shrewsbury, PA. Condolences may be sent to Jack and Sue Lipscomb, 104 Winifred Terrace, Huddleston, VA 24104. Memorials may be made in Amy's memory to: The Agape Center, 1159 Promised Land Road (PO Box 573), Moneta, VA 24121 or online at www.agapecentersml.org.

Volunteers: Help Sponsor a 'Volunteer Hole' for the Agape Open

Let's show our golfers that the Agape Volunteers support their efforts by sponsoring a hole for the Agape Open on September 10. Each Hole sponsorship is \$200, and you can make a donation for any amount. Please drop off your check or mail to The Agape Center, PO Box 573, Moneta, VA 24121.

Webster Marine Center, a Gold Sponsor for the 12th Annual 2016 Agape Open golf tournament, will provide a Sea-Doo for the Hole In One prize. The tournament will be at Mariner's Landing Golf and Country Club with lunch, catered by Agape Volunteer Sue Frase, will be at the Saunders Fire House. Prizes will also be awarded for the three lowest team scores, longest drive (men and women) and closest to the pin (men and women).



Jim Mills, Webster Marine, displays a 2016 SeaDoo the company will provide for the Hole In

Tournament level sponsors to date include Re/Max Lakefront Realty (Phyllis and Casey Johnson), Runk & Pratt, Edward Jones (Carl Grove), Distribution Specialists, Inc., Shumaker Industries, and Bridgewater businesses Gifts Ahoy, Bridgewater Sportswear, and Fun N Games Arcade. Additional sponsorships are still available at various levels.

There are still openings for individual players and teams. Registration is \$65/person or \$260/foursome. Additional details and registration forms are available online at www.agapecentersml.org or contact Becky Blackman at 540-855-8366.

Volunteer HELP NEEDED For Charity Home Tour

(See Story Page 4)

Please sign up to help with the Charity Home Tour. This is a major source of income for Agape, but one of the requirements to receive the funds is to provide hosts for one of the homes. You can also enlist friends, neighbors, relatives – they do not need to be an Agape volunteer to help with this event! This year, our assigned home is the home of Rick and Debbie Cocrane, both Agape volunteers. Show your support for the Cocrane's, and for The Agape Center, by helping at least one shift during this three-day event, October 7-9.

By the Numbers Served . . .

	July, 2016	July, 2015
Families	797	780
Individuals	2657	2496

GOD Stories

Five Surgeries in Three Years and Still Smiling

As an Agape client since 2011, Nancy Wells has seen a lot of changes. But the most significant in her life has been how God has seen her through some major life changes.



Nancy Wells

First, her mother was called home to heaven in 2008, and then later when she had to quit her job due to illness. Nancy had been a certified nursing assistant in several nursing homes over the past 27 years, a job she loved. But when both knees and one hip needed replacement, she had to give up her work, and go on disability. She had five surgeries in three years, and recalled, “If it hadn’t been for the Lord, I wouldn’t be here today because it was so serious and painful.” Her hip got infected and had to be redone, but she said, “God kept me motivated and strong throughout the recovery and rehabilitation.”

Nancy and her husband, John, often come to Agape together and see a male mentor, but whenever she comes alone, she sees whichever mentor is available.

She continued, “I have been helped so much, especially spiritually. Each time I meet with a mentor, I can explain things going on in my life and I really appreciate their prayers for me.

I enjoy all the mentors!” Nancy is a part of Franklin Heights Baptist Church, and says, “I want to keep serving God and am looking forward to His return to earth!”

The Eyes of the Lord . . .

Deborah Thompson has been an Agape client almost since it opened in 2004. She explained, “I read about The Agape Center in the newspaper, where it explained that Agape meant unconditional love. I read that there were mentors who could help people spiritually, as well as provide food and clothing.” She accepted Jesus as her Savior in 2009, and has a special affection for special needs children. She said, “My special needs daughter lived until she was 11 years old in 1989. I continue to help with special needs children in the nursery and as a Sunday School helper in my church, Cold Spring Pentecostal Holiness Church in Thaxton.”

Since she has been saved, Deborah gets up at 3 am to read *Our Daily Bread* devotional, her Bible, to meditate and pray before she starts her work day.

She and her husband then leave for their jobs in Roanoke at a dry cleaning company, where they process laundry and dry cleaning for area retail locations. She has been in this field since 1990, when she started working after losing her daughter.



Deborah Thompson

One recent, foggy morning, after her usual practice of spending time with God before work, she and her husband were driving into Roanoke. She saw a vehicle coming toward her with the lights blinking, so she slowed and moved into the other lane. But before she knew it, she saw that there was a second tractor trailer just in front of her. “It was as if God put his foot on my brake; my car was stopped by God. I had nothing to do with it. Neither of us were hurt, and we realized that our ‘on-time God’ had intervened,” she recalled.

Deborah concluded, “I believe God has ministering angels who are around those who fear God and they are watching over me and my husband.”

***The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
and his ears are attentive to their cry.***

Psalms 34:8 NIV

GOD Stories

“Agape Has Been My Refuge During the Storm”

Vickie Byers has seen more tragedy in her life than most folks, but she is a joyful, hopeful person because of her dependence and confidence in Jesus! She started our interview saying, “I have child who is in prison for 7 years for drugs and alcohol. But, God has saved his life.”

As it happened, TJ, who was 21 at the time, kept coming home drunk. He was often in an overdose state, shaking with DTs, “and I would wash him down with cool wash-cloths, praying over him the entire time. I kept repeating, ‘This too shall pass.’”

He was sentenced to 40 years in prison, but the judge reduced it to seven years, two of which he has now served. But even in prison, he was in trouble. He figured a way to make ink from melting checkers over a radiator to get the color, and, finding staples in books, he began giving tattoos to himself and other prisoners. This landed him additional time to his sentence. Ultimately, he was put into solitary confinement. “This was a very dark time for me, because we could no longer talk on the phone, and that was my life-line to him,” Vickie recalled.

When he was sent back to his pod, he started again with the tattooing. When he was caught again, he called me “and asked me to pray for him. I reminded him that I had taught him that he should not mark his body, according to the Scriptures. At the time, I didn’t know all the details,” Vickie lamented.

I continued to pray and asked my church to pray. About six months ago, he called and asked me to keep praying because he was going back to the court to be sentenced again. After the court appearance, “TJ called me and said, ‘When I was standing before the judge, I raised my neck to show the judge the tattoo on my neck. It says, ‘this too shall pass’, and I told the judge this was my way to witness. I don’t talk about God much, but when a new inmate comes in who is down-hearted, I raise my neck to show them my tattoo and this is a great encouragement for them.’”

The judge said, “Who am I to judge you for doing God’s work! Go and sin no more.” TJ was sent back to the pod, without additional time or penalties. “I know it was my prayers and the prayers of the people in my church, who intervened with God for us,” Vickie said.

An added blessing occurred when the cost of the calls from the prison was miraculously reduced. It normally cost \$7 for each phone call, and Vickie couldn’t afford this, even though she wanted to stay close to TJ. She doesn’t have transportation to visit him, but they are allowed regular phone calls. She brought this concern to her church, and after prayer, the phone calls were reduced to 94 cents for 22 minutes! Vickie says, “This had to be God at work again.”



Vickie Byers

Vickie lost her husband, her childhood sweetheart, after 22 years of marriage when he was killed in a car accident. Shortly after that, her home burned to the ground, and she and her two sons had nowhere to go. With the help of her church, Doe Run Christian Church, she was able to locate a new home, and was provided furnishings for it by area churches. All this time, she continued working as a certified nursing assistant in nursing homes in the area. Then, her second home burned to the ground. She came home from work to find a heap of ashes. This left her and the boys homeless again, and though she had trusted Jesus as a child, she felt hopeless. However, God brought the right people into her life, and she landed in another home. “Agape was so helpful at this time, both spiritually through the mentors who encouraged and prayed with me, but also provided the household items that I desperately needed.” Vickie mentioned that she was only lacking one thing in her refurbished home: an electric can opener. In another example of God’s provision, an electronic can opener was donated to Agape within days of our conversation!

“I thank God every day that we weren’t home at the time.” Dealing with all of that grief, two burned homes, her husband killed, her son in prison, and the stresses of daily life raising two sons alone, while working full – time, took its toll on Vickie. But looking back, she says, “God is great! Agape has been so good to me and for me. The Agape Center is my refuge from the storm. I am so thankful for the people who have lifted me up during my valleys.”

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Psalm 46:1 New International Version (NIV)

RESPONDING TO GOD'S VOICE

Agape Volunteers Open Homes for Charity Home Tour

This year, two homes of Agape volunteers will be showcased for the Charity Home Tour (CHT), Angela and Alvaro Jaramillo and Rick and Debbie Cocrane.

Rick decided during last year's CHT to offer his home as one of the tour stops after he saw the particular care the Agape volunteers gave to their host home. Each charity which receives funds must provide enough volunteers to host one of the eight homes during the three day event. For Agape, this amounts to about 165 volunteers covering 900 hours. Rick thought, "If the Agape volunteers will host our home, we know we can count on it being well-taken care of."

Angela and Alvaro were approached by friends to offer their home for the CHT. At first, they were a little concerned about privacy, but felt the benefits to the charities outweighed their fears. Angela says, "I think of it as a way to help

Agape. I heard good comments about the people who come to your house and that it is very professionally managed, well-done. So we decided to help with this. I am a little nervous, but I am also excited to do it for Agape."

The Jaramillos have lived in their home about four years, since Alvaro retired. He worked his entire career for an international company, Unilever, which offered them opportunities to live in their home country, Columbia, and also in Costa Rica, Mexico, and then in America, New Jersey, and Missouri. They vacationed to Moneta often, which is where Angela's mother, and her sister and family have lived for several years. With a degree in Business Administration, Angela didn't have much opportunity to use her skills in business. After six months into her career, the first of many transfers sent the family to other places. Once they started a family, Alvaro says proudly, "She did the best job ever – being a great mom."



Angela and Alvaro Jaramillo on their deck.

Angela first got her taste of volunteering in Mexico, where she initially volunteered in her church, teaching children, and then in an orphanage her church was involved with. Once she moved to the Smith Mountain Lake area, she quickly got involved in the community, volunteering several times a month at Agape, as a mentor, a runner, and preparing Christmas baskets. Alvaro's activities at Agape include pick-ups for groceries at local grocery stores.

Alvaro also works as a licensed realtor with Mary Lou McDonald's ML Realty based in Huddleston. The Alvaros have two sons who are attending Liberty University in Lynchburg.

Rick and Debbie had similar concerns about having their home on display. They have been asked many times over the five years they have lived here to include their home in the CHT, but they didn't feel that the house was ready, so declined. This year was different.

Rick and Debbie have been coming to the CHT for the past fifteen years (even before they relocated to the area). Debbie says, "We got a lot of ideas for our own home from the previous tours, and we always thought it was a great way to support local charities. Once I realized how much good it would do for The Agape Center and other worthy charities, I became more comfortable with the idea. We agreed to open our home with the stipulation that the sponsoring charity would be The Agape Center. Having the Agape volunteers staff the home will make the weekend a lot of fun."

Rick and Debbie wear many volunteer hats. Rick, a retired Navy officer, works part-time from home writing logistics policy as a consultant for the US Special Operations Command. Rick volunteers at the VA Medical Center in Salem, taking wheelchair-confined patients to lunch. He coaches baseball for the Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy and is also active in the Military Officers Association of America. At Agape, he helps write grants and also drives a truck for the pantry pick-ups at Wal-Mart in Roanoke. He has volunteered in many capacities for the Charity Home Tour, including parking attendant (for boats and cars), traffic captain, team leader for the Agape-designated home, and now this year as homeowner. (*Charity Home Tour continued page 5*)

RESPONDING TO GOD'S VOICE

(Charity Home Tour continued from page 4)

Debbie volunteers with their church, EastLake Community Church, assisting as needed during the week, serving in the kitchen on Wednesday nights, and providing child care in the nursery on Sundays. Debbie is an active Agape volunteer. She sorts clothes on Mondays, serves as a mentor, and is the supervisor once a month.

Debbie and Rick met on their first day of Officer Indoctrination School in the Navy. She was a freshly minted nurse who wanted to experience some excitement, so she and her nursing school roommate joined the US Navy together and served in San Diego. Rick earned his masters degree in healthcare administration and worked in his local hospital, but he soon realized that his life revolved around working nights and weekends. Wanting adventure, he enlisted in the Navy, planning to serve three years. However, after they were married, and ultimately assigned to the same location, they both realized that they liked the Navy lifestyle. The fraternity, morals and values that Navy life offered appealed to them. After she fulfilled her initial three-year commitment, Debbie left active service but continued in the Navy as an inactive reservist. Rick continued serving until his retirement in 2002. They enjoyed the excitement and adventure, having lived in Washington DC; London, England; Okinawa, Japan; Tampa, Florida; Rhode Island, and South Carolina. Their three children are grown and they have one grandchild.

Debbie concluded, "We believe in the missions of both The Agape Center and the Charity Home Tour. We are blessed to live on the lake and wanted to return this blessing to a good cause. So given our love for The Agape Center, we agreed this was the year to open our home to the Charity Home Tour."



Rick and Debbie Cocrane

Agape Volunteer Runs for Agape



**Pastor Rock Chocklett,
"Bearded for Agape".**

Rock Chocklett is one of the 'hidden volunteers' of Agape! He has been volunteering for about a year, but due to his unpredictable schedule as pastor of Huddleston Community Church in Bedford, he asked to be assigned a job that was extremely flexible! That ended up being the furniture pick-up department. Several times a month, men from the furniture department go to different locations to pick-up furniture, appliances and other large items, as well as left-overs from large yard sales and specialty donations. Rock (his real name) is one of those volunteers.

On September 24-25, Rock will be competing in his second Reebok Spartan Race in Wintergreen, Virginia. These are rugged, obstacle-riddled courses through land, mud, and water, combining obstacles that test both physical strength and mental resolve. The goal is to complete the race.

The first level, which Rock completed last year, is the Spartan Sprint, about three miles with over fifteen obstacles. (*Race Continued Page 8*)

RESPONDING TO GOD'S VOICE

NEW DEPARTMENT FORMED

A new department has been created at Agape in response to a new electronic system for processing United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) information. As a partner program of Feeding America Southwest Virginia, The Agape Center provides data on each client participating in the program.

Agape transitioned to the new system beginning in July. Previously, paper forms were completed by mentors updating client information each month. Now, the clients visit with the USDA clerks, located in Room #1, and as each client form is completed on the Kindle, the client



Client David Stovall is checked in by Cam Brandon, USDA Clerk, and Doreen Balzarini, Data Manager.

signs it, and it is submitted directly, electronically, to Feeding America Southwest Virginia. This provides greater accuracy, consistency in data collection, privacy of information, and efficiency by not having to manually tabulate and report results.

This system is not only more accurate and timely, but the greatest benefit is that clients and mentors can focus specifically on the client issues during their time together, rather than being distracted by paperwork. The response from clients and mentors has been very positive.

Doreen Balzarini is the trainer for the volunteers in this area. Volunteers are being recruited as new volunteers to Agape, and also from existing departments, particularly Data. Doreen notes, "The Data staff really enjoys this new opportunity. Data

clerks are familiar with the forms and requirements, and recognize client's names, but this gives them the chance for personal interaction with clients, something they cannot do in their Data roles."



USDA Clerk, Dave Wolf, with Eloise Wright.



USDA Clerk Susan Wolf and Client Krystal Hannan.



Client Sabrina Howell and USDA Clerk Pam Morris.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S VOICE

DO YOU KNOW ANY 'HIDDEN' VOLUNTEERS?

Volunteers are needed in all Departments and in all capacities! Perhaps you know someone who might have some extra time to help others in our community – clients, friends, family members of any age and time available. There are many jobs that are 'hidden', meaning they don't require a regular schedule, or even at The Agape Center! We need people who can work from home, who can help with transportation of foods from the various donation locations, make phone calls, work on special events and support the ministry of Agape in a variety of ways. If you even think you might know someone, please contact Sue Lipscomb or Karen Jones at 540/296-0609 or Agapecentersml@aol.com to arrange an appointment, tour, or conversation about the opportunities.



Carol Moyer, Pantry, delivers school supplies to Courtney, 11th grade, with her mom Lisa Crawford. Agape provided school supplies to over 1000 students in August.

Abundance in the Pantry Continues Through the Summer Months

Agape has been blessed during these summer months with an abundance of donations from grocery stores, farmers and other food pantries, as they have shared their abundance so we could share with our clients. Three to four times every week, the Transportation Team picks up donations to provide for our clients. This is yet



The Agape Center Provide Vision/Hearing Screening



Lions Club representatives Burt Bowers and Gloria Guice provided vision screening for Agape Client Tina McMillion.

The Moneta Lions Club teamed up to provide vision and hearing screening for Agape clients and their families during the week of July 12th. Over 50 individuals received the free screening as part of the services provided by the two organizations.

In addition to the screening, The Lions Club was able to provide financial assistance for those needing a professional eye exam, glasses, professional hearing exam or hearing aids.

another of God's many promises fulfilled before our eyes each week! "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." *Luke 6:38 New International Version (NIV)*

RESPONDING TO GOD'S VOICE

(*Race Continued from Page 5*)

The second level, which Rock will compete in this September, is the Super Spartan Race, with over eight miles and twenty obstacles to overcome. Assuming he completes this year's race, he will enter the third level next year, the Spartan Beast. This is a grueling twelve or more miles with twenty-five plus obstacles. The Reebok Spartan Races are conducted in over 100 countries around the world.

The obstacles Rock has encountered include climbing, throwing spears at a target, crawling under obstacles, jumping over fire, deep water-filled trenches, and barbed wire!

Rock has a degree in exercise science, and has taught middle school health and physical education. His six years in the Army National Guard also kept him in shape, so he is serious about physical fitness. But training for an obstacle course, where the obstacles will be a surprise, is a new level of commitment. He does circuit training, mixing cardio and weight training. In addition to running, he adds some elements to his routine that mimic some of the obstacles he might confront in the race, such as tire flipping, Olympic lifting, adding to his workout each day.

He's been training seriously for several weeks, with each week getting progressively more demanding. At the beginning of August, Rock decided to go "Bearded for Agape", to remind him to train, and also to add to the element of purpose beyond the race, and that is to raise funds for Agape. Through the "Everyday Heroes Program", people can sign up to financially support his effort in the race, and all funds will go to the Agape Center. He says, "I decided to not shave until after the race. This will be a



The Spartan Race Trifecta

The ultimate goal is to complete each level in order to obtain a piece of a trifecta. Once the third piece has been earned, the three magnetic medals fit together to complete a trifecta, a face shield reminiscent of the metal armor of the original Spartans. Image: <http://shop.spartan.com/spartan-race-trifecta-medal-display.html>

first for me, going so long without shaving. (I have never gone 9 weeks before.) Now every time I look in a mirror it will remind me to keep training. Hopefully, it will encourage others to do something out of the ordinary and help a guy you don't know help a great organization help others. The commitment of the staff at Agape to helping those in need is top notch! After signing up for the Super Spartan, I decided to not just run, but to run for a cause. You may have always wanted to run a race and for reasons known only to you haven't been able to because of schedule or injury. So why not run with me in spirit and together we can help an organization that exists solely to help others?"

To support Rock Chocklett in the Super Spartan Race, go to <https://give.everydayhero.com/us/rock> or directly at www.agapecentersml.org.

August, 2016

Volume 7 Issue 8

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

Executive Director	Sue Lipscomb	agapecentersml@aol.com
Newsletter Editor	Karen Baker	karenbaker02@hotmail.com
Proofreader	Cam Brandon	

Sponsoring Churches

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

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