



Where Needs Meet Love

March, 2016

By the Numbers . . .

February, 2016
790 Families
2560 Individuals

February, 2015
617 Families

Welcome New Volunteers

Cora Arthur - Where needed
Dick Atlee – Transportation

Find Out Why These Volunteers are
Feasting! See Page 2



Editor's Note: There is virtually nothing one does that cannot be used for God's glory. One of the joys of writing this newsletter is finding unique ways of serving God, and this month we found a doozy! See story page 4.



Agape Receives Contribution of \$4000



Grand Winter Gala Committee members (from left Phyllis Johnson, Pat Park, and Kim Tyson) present donations to SML Academy representative Karen Hiltz and to Agape Executive Director Sue Lipscomb (right).

Mark Your Calendar. . .

July 2 – Angel Flight – Our new Christmas in July event!
More details to come.

Kroger and Amazon Provide Dollars to Agape

Each month, we remind everyone that if you register your Kroger Card and your Amazon Smile account, a portion of your spending will be donated to Agape. To help volunteers make this designation, Will and Joanie McCullors were on hand at the recent Volunteer Training to help people sign up, or register their choice of charity with either Kroger or Amazon. If you have not yet done so and need instructions, please check with Sue Lipscomb. This is a painless way to help Agape with needed funds for client services.



Will McCullors (left) assists Kay Preston in registering her Kroger card to benefit Agape.

Your Input is Important to Agape's Strategic Planning

Recognizing that the Holy Spirit guides the ministry of The Agape Center, the Strategic Planning Committee has adopted Proverbs 15:22 as its guide: *Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed.*



Sue Lipscomb, Executive Director, welcomed nearly 100 volunteers to the Training/Input Meeting.

Counsel and advice has been sought from several sources, including a focus group comprised of Agape clients, from departmental leaders, and from nearly 100 volunteers who provided counsel during the training session on March 12.

The Committee has also completed its SWOT analysis, an assessment of the Strengths (finances, staff, and facilities), Weaknesses (for purposes of overcoming), Opportunities (programs, ministries, services, funding options) and Threats (the



Betty Ann Allen led the Pantry volunteers during their input session.

economy, government regulations etc) facing The Agape Center.

The Prayer Team, led by Marion Reed, is continuing to lift up this effort daily.

The committee will analyze the input from these various sources, and then develop a plan for The Agape Center covering the next 3-5 years. This plan will be presented to the Board in April for their review and approval, and the leadership will then continue to address the issues and opportunities that are identified.

If anyone would like the teaching notes from these sessions, or if you have not been able to be involved in any of the input sessions and would like to offer your ideas, contact Jan Hogle: tofinishstrong@gmail.com.



Monica Berger and Kris McKenzie led the Store/Clothing/Warehouse volunteers during their input session.



Jan Hogle shared with Agape volunteers the factors influencing poverty, challenging participants to gain a greater understanding of our clients based on understanding their world view.



Mentors shared their ideas on how to better relate with clients.

GOD STORIES

Agape Client Feels Power of Prayers

Kaye Hale has experienced the power of prayer in a personal and profound way. She had served as director of the West End Center for Children in Roanoke for 25 years. After that many years, she had developed a network of friends, children and grandchildren of children she had served over the years. It was a multi-generational network of individuals and churches who turned their hearts to the Lord on her behalf during a recent period of devastating attacks on her body.

Kaye had not been sick, and does not remember exactly what happened. However, in November, 2015 her son said he heard her calling him, and he rushed her to Franklin Memorial Hospital. The next day she was transferred to Roanoke Memorial Hospital, where the doctors found that the blood supply to her colon had collapsed and essentially her colon had died. She was in a coma, with complete kidney failure and infections. The doctors saw no way of recovery after she endured five surgeries, eleven procedures, kidney dialysis, pneumonia and other respiratory issues, seven weeks in the hospital and two weeks in the nursing home for rehabilitation. It was a period which she has little memory, but has been described to her by others. When she finally left the nursing home, on her 'own steam', she returned home for recovery.

Kaye has been home for six weeks now, and still needs additional surgery later this spring.

She says, "The fact that I'm alive at all is truly a miracle. I don't remember the worst of it, which is also a blessing. And then to have my kidneys recover, no longer requiring dialysis is extraordinary; the doctors never expected that to happen! All of this has given me the desire to strengthen my relationship with God. An added benefit is that my son has also sought to strengthen his relationship with God. After so many miracles, we know that God is with us and has a purpose for us."



Kaye Hale

God Provides Agape "Fleet"

When you purchase used vehicles, you are sometimes in for repairs! After many months of good service from last year's purchase of the box truck, the repair estimate far exceeded the budget. So the Agape Prayer Team lifted the need to the Lord, and Jack Lipscomb put on his negotiating hat. God provided by allowing the repair shop to donate the parts, only charging for the labor.

Then, a second blessing came when a refrigerated box truck became available within the budgeted amount. So now, Agape is blessed with two trucks, enabling more pick-ups and less delays for food (five days/week) and furniture and other items as needed. Praise Be To God!



A refrigerator box truck is the second vehicle added to the Agape Fleet.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S VOICE

Hunters for the Hungry Supply Venison to Agape



A frequent compliment we receive from Agape clients is thanks for the deer meat that is provided throughout the winter months by Hunters for the Hungry. Some of the venison is provided by Evans Wild Game Processing facility in Bedford, owned and operated by Dennis Evans. Walking into the processing facility was such a pleasant surprise. It wasn't splattered with blood on the walls and it didn't smell of meat! In fact, one is greeted with beautiful exhibitions of wild life, including the wild boar on page 1, the muzzleloaders held by a deer's hooves (above), and even a beautiful pheasant. But more significant to Dennis Evans is the antique equipment from his parent's grocery store that he uses for his avocation.

Dennis' parents opened Evans Grocery north of Lynchburg in 1950. His dad began processing wild game for Hunters for the Hungry in the early 1990's, and Dennis decided to continue the

processing service after his father passed away in 2005 and the family closed the grocery.

Dennis has several pieces of equipment that have been operated for decades and are still working in the spotless processing section of his facility. He has three employees who work full-time during the eleven-week hunting season that runs from October through January: the skinner, the butcher, and the packager. The butcher is Bob Espinosa, who has been a butcher for over 50 years. Bob will be 80 years old when he retires this year, a loss that pains Dennis to even talk about. Dennis's family members also help as the season gets busy.



Dennis Evans with his favorite Butcher Boy meat saw and some ground venison.

Dennis's operation is small, as he continues to work full-time for the DMV. He says, "I am fortunate that I have a job that I am able to take a block of time off during the season in order to work full time processing the wildlife. I am able to take all of my vacation at the same time in order to do this."

He only processes for hunters' personal use and for the Hunters for the Hungry program, a state-wide network of processors that gives discounts to hunters to process their bounty when it will be donated to local food pantries. Hunters pay a discounted fee of \$45/deer and Agape transportation volunteers pick it up after it is processed at the Evans' facility.

About 1200-1400 pounds are processed at his facility each year, which is about 40-75 deer. This past season was a particularly heavy harvest, and Agape received about 1000 pounds of venison from the Hunters.

Dennis says, "When you are processing the meat, you just look at it as another deer. However, when the Agape truck pulls up to get the meat, it really sets in. This is not just another deer; it is for a family who will enjoy a special treat. We make a point of providing a variety of cuts, roasts, steaks, tenderloins and ground meat, so that people have assortment of venison."

Editor's Note: The hunters must pay the processing discounted processing fee for each deer they donate to Agape. If you would like to help cover some of the cost for the processing, you can make a contribution to Agape with a notation that it is for Hunters for the Hungry.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S VOICE

Mentor Takes Next Step as God Leads

Mentor Bill Griggs continues to see the path God has laid out for his life the longer he pursues God. Trained as an altar boy in the Catholic Church, Bill learned Latin and proper respect from the nuns in his parochial school. Yet, he says, "I didn't know anything about a relationship with God." He became a follower of Jesus when he was 29, and God has continued to astonish him ever since. The latest surprise is his call to become Pastor at Dwelling Place Fellowship in Moneta.

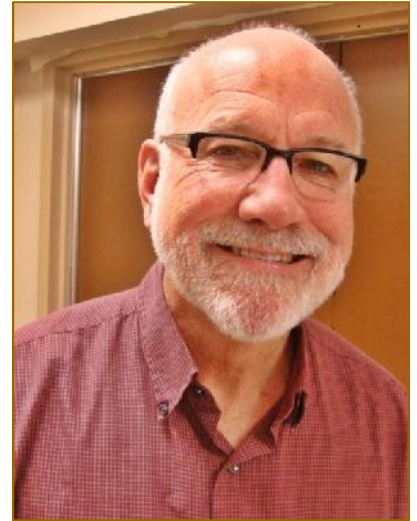
Bill had served many years as a deacon with the Assemblies of God Church. When he and his wife, Debbie (Floor Supervisor), moved to the Lake area, they found Dwelling Place, a church plant that was about one year old. He served as an elder at Dwelling Place for the past five years. Bill explained that "Dwelling place is one of four church plants, with the mother church in the New River Valley. There are a total of three churches in southwest Virginia, one in Atlanta Georgia, and one just started in Hollywood, California.

"The one thing I didn't feel any desire for was the role of pastor. Having been in leadership as a deacon and elder, I knew both sides of ministry. I really enjoyed my roles, but had no desire for more responsibility in the church. I had been asked by others if I felt called for more involvement, but

my answer was always unequivocally and emphatically 'no'.

"When the pastor of Dwelling Place was called by God to return to the New River Valley, the search for a replacement began, and as an elder, I was a part of that. Meanwhile, Debbie and I, as well as some other families, began considering if we should migrate to another church in the area. One morning in my time with the Lord, I felt the Holy Spirit overwhelm me, and there came a burning desire to step into the pastoral position. I have a heart to serve as a shepherd, but I had resisted this particular role.

"I felt that coming up with a fresh message each week would be my greatest challenge, but that only makes me more dependent upon God. I went to the elders and they had sensed the same direction for the church, and for me. Since then, my calling has been confirmed in many ways. I began as pastor on January 2, 2016, and I have seen God continue to form my heart into the shepherd he has called me to be. The church members have been very affirming as well. And most importantly, God has provided just the message, a fresh message, each week. I have been visiting people in various neighborhoods, and have a great desire to see God shape us as a community of worshippers into His image."



Pastor Bill Griggs has been mentoring at Agape for about eighteen months.

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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

tweedleva@aol.com

Newsletter Editor

Karen Baker

karenbaker02@hotmail.com

Sponsoring Churches

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