



Where Needs Meet AGAPE Love

December, 2016

Christmas Greetings

BY THE NUMBERS SERVED

November 2016

950 Families

3160 Individuals

November 2015

832 Families

2662 Individuals

WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEERS

Bonnie Beisser-USDA, Store
Ron Cordell-Data

Bill Goode-Maintenance
Sandra Goode-Telephone
Bev Heckman-Gift Store
Rhonda Johnson -Toy
Factory

Jan Johnston-Gift Store
Analia Malvasia-Clerk
Andre Malvasia-Pantry
John Maynard-Furniture,
Pantry

Brandy Orange-Gift Store
Bonny Phillips-Toy Factory
JD Phillips-Furniture, Pantry

SPECIAL DONATIONS

\$2195 from Blue Grass/Gospel
Concert/Silent Auction

December, 2016

Agape Volunteers:



What an amazing team of volunteers our Lord has brought together to serve at the Agape Center. He handpicked each of you for a specific job at a specific time and the results have been extraordinary!

In addition to the normal routine at Agape, the following events required many extra hours of work and commitment from our Agape volunteers: The Grand Winter Gala – Christmas in July – Back to School – Strategic Planning – Postal Food Drive – Getting Ahead Program – Agape Open Golf Tournament – SML Charity Home Tour – Thanksgiving Feed A Family – Blue Grass Concert and Christmas Angels. In every event, the Lord's presence was obvious – He is working in and through each of you to accomplish His purpose in this community.

Jack and I want to personally thank each of you for your commitment to Agape and wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.

We give God the glory for you and for His continual blessings and provisions beyond anything we could imagine. It is a privilege to serve and be a part of Agape walking along side each of you!

With a grateful heart,

Sue Lipscomb,
Executive Director



Getting Ahead Graduates: From Left, top back row: Annamarie Hackman, Kim Wright, Shelly Olman, Crystal Hodges, Melissa Burke, Agneau Paul. Front row from left: Pam Sinex, Agape Co-Facilitator, Stephanie Poindexter, Brittany Montgomery, Connie Hobbs, Tasha Wolf, Donald Smith, and Jan Hogle, Co-Facilitator.

December 12th marked a new beginning for twelve Agape clients who have completed a 48 hour program called ‘Getting Ahead in a Just Getting-By World’ (GA). The program is designed to help people get out of poverty through greater understanding of the factors that lead to poverty and keep people dependent. The graduation ceremony was held at East-Lake Community Church where Pastor Troy Keaton encouraged the graduates that “indeed, you have every available resource from God to move forward in your lives: knowledge of Him, hope in His sure promises and access to His power.” The clients were accepted into the rigors GA program after completing applications and interviews, and agreeing to rigid requirements including near-perfect attendance, punctuality, and homework. The program is part of Bridges Out of Poverty initiative embraced by Bedford County Social Services. Jan Hogle and Pam Sinex, both Agape mentors and trainers, were the co-facilitators of the group. The program was funded by the Centra Foundation, SML Rotary Club, and Moneta Medical Center. (*GA continued page 7*)

Want to help the next class—February 6 to March 29?

Hosts are needed to provide/serve breakfast for each class from 8:30—9:30 am. This involves preparing a savory dish, some fruit and bringing these treats to Agape, setting out a table and cleaning up afterward. It involves about one hour at Agape on class days. Please contact karenbaker015@gmail.com to sign up for a specific day.

Childcare is needed for each class from 8:45 to 12 noon. If you can help with this, please contact Janet Hogle at tofinishstrong@gmail.com.



Agape volunteers hosted breakfast for each of the Getting Ahead sessions. They included Angela Jaramillo (left), Cyndi Horvath, Pam Sinex, Jan Hogle, Karen Baker, Nancy Stouffer, Sheila Saunders, Grace Cooper, Marion Reed, Ginny Harris, Ellen Beck, Monica Bergman, Kris McKenzie, Pat Hofheinz, and Stephanie Childress.

Maia goes for a ride in the store while her mom, Jessica Flach, attends the GA class. Sarah Vis (right) and Carrie Dimwiddie provided childcare for the GA participants’ children.





Annamarie Hackman plans “to use what she has learned to deal with her chronic pain, and to use her skills in social work to help others and pay it forward.”

Class participant Stephanie Poindexter was the MC, and said she was thankful she “was able to learn and discover the means for making better decisions. I plan to stick with my goals and follow God.”



Shelly and Chris Olman have been married 34 years. She says, “When we got married, we had everything—good jobs, home, things we needed. She worked as a welder/trainer at Plygem, but lost her job when health issues overcame her. Chris lost his job with the recession in 2008. Shelly gave “thanks to God for giving me strength for perfect attendance at class and for all that I have learned to make good choices.”



Agape Mentor Mark Plumb congratulates Agneau Paul, one of the GA graduates. Agneau came to America from Haiti in 1992 and is blessed with seven children, 24 years old to 6 months. The class started in his birthday month of October, and he says, “I was so blessed to meet twelve new friends on my birthday—my GA co-investigators.” He is “excited about my future because I know nothing is impossible with God.”

Brittany Montgomery is so excited about what she has learned from the Getting Ahead class and has found “a new theme for my life: I have a new start, a new beginning. I am going to teach my daughter the skills I have learned so she can have a more stable life.”



Donald Smith learned that he had a lot of personal reserves to overcome obstacles but had allowed his personal negatives to control him. One of his greatest assets is the support of his wife, Chris. She drove him to every single class, and waited in the car for him for the three-hour class.

Shadow Volunteers

Shadow Volunteer Models Prayer for Client in Need

In September, Amanda Booth called the Agape Center to cancel her scheduled appointment at Agape. Her two-year old son, Liam, has suffered with skin issues since he was born, and now he had an infection that was not responding to multiple medications and hospitalizations he had endured. Amanda was astonished when the telephone volunteer offered to pray with her for Liam. She says, "I had never had anyone do that for me before. I am a follower of Christ, but I am not comfortable praying out loud, and this volunteer didn't even know me!"

Laura Flight was the telephone volunteer that day, one of those 'shadow roles' that are seldom seen by others. She is a volunteer who can be seen in the many different roles she plays at Agape., in addition to answering phones. Laura regularly calls upon her church, Bedrock, to come in for specific projects; she works as supervisor in the pantry, and spends many-a-day unloading produce and other food products at times that Agape is not open.

Amanda continued, "Her modeling of praying when a need was present has inspired me to be more aware of my surroundings, and to bring Christ into the conversation and prayer as needed. She was a great inspiration to me." And the best part: "Liam has been totally healed, with no scars, and that was nearly three months ago."



Client Amanda Booth (left) with Volunteer Laura Flight.

In Memoriam

Agape lost one of its Shadow Volunteers when Richard Walker was killed in a motorcycle accident in October. He helped keep the refrigeration units in the pantry operating.

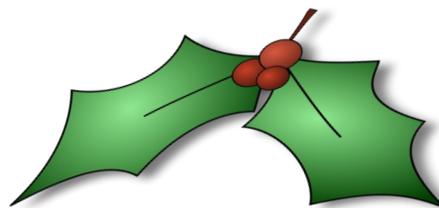
Richard was the brother of Roger Walker, who with his wife, Ann, also work behind the scenes, she in clothing and both go to Feeding America Southwest Virginia every other week to bring back a trailer full of USDA & other food. "They have been doing it for about as long as Agape has existed," says Judy Harper, Pantry Director.

Roger and Ann expressed their appreciation to the Agape volunteers for the many phone calls, cards and visits on the death of Richard.

Sending Messages of Encouragement

Did you every wonder who sent you the birthday card from the "Agape Family"? That would be one of our Shadow Volunteers, Joyce Nunn. She is the longest-serving Agape volunteer, who started in 2005. Every month she sends birthday greetings to Agape volunteers, as well as get-well, sympathy and encouragement cards! She began bagging clothes in the store, working in the pantry, and eventually sorting and filling the toiletry bags for each client. Joyce likes being in the background, knowing that her work is meeting the needs of the clients. She says, "I enjoy coming to Agape. When I've been away (due to surgeries), I really miss the love and support I feel here. I am thankful that God led me here because being here is so encouraging to me." In addition to her card ministry, Joyce continues to work in clothing, sorting donated clothes every week.





Shirley Oliver is a long-time volunteer, sorting and hanging the clothing donations that arrive daily. She was recently overheard saying, "I am disgustingly healthy", and at 90 years old, she continues to follow God's voice by volunteering at Agape!

Sheets are the second most-requested item for our clients (behind towels) and Agape was recently blessed by pallet-loads of brand-new sheets of all sizes from Gleaning for the World, one of Agape's partner organizations. This bedding will be a real treat for those in need.



**Diane Davis
Agape Book Reviewer**

The Christmas Shoppe

By Melody Carson

Matilda Honeycutt came to Parrish Springs, purchased an old building and opened her "Christmas Shoppe". She was different in dress and actions. Her shop had no Christmas merchandise. The people called her a hippie, and even a witch.

However, as her patrons looked and shopped,

they found old treasures in what looked like just another thrift shop. Throughout her shop, Matilda placed signs with Messages of love and truth.

With each old and broken item in the shop, everyone found a part of their past in Matilda's shop that took them back to the real truth and love of Christmas. Each gift was

given to them without a price. It reminded them of the precious gift of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. A gift given in love, free to us, for He paid the price for our Salvation.

When Matilda left Parrish Springs, she left the gift of love in the hearts of all.

Westlake Baptist Church Becomes 14th Agape Church Sponsor



Westlake Baptist Church's Pastor Justin Likens

Westlake Baptist Church became the fourteenth sponsoring church with Agape. Justin Likens, who has pastored at the church since 2008 says, "We believe that scripture commands us to reach out to those in our community, to meet physical and spiritual needs. We feel that Christians have a more meaningful impact when we work together on larger issues, so partnering with Agape was a natural. It provides the structure and the organizational ability to address these needs, rather than us reinventing the wheel. We know there is a tremendous need in our area, and it is simply too much for a single church to be able to meet all the needs. At Westlake, we receive many calls every week, and we don't have the capacity to vet the process. We want to be good stewards of our time and resources, so it is a blessing to be able to channel these requests to Agape as we come along-side to support this effort. We have several people in our congregation who are involved with Agape, and knowing their passion and confidence in the organization gives Agape great credibility." Agape welcomes Westlake Baptist Church and looks forward to our partnership!

Kroger and Amazon Provide Dollars to Agape

Your purchases at Kroger and Amazon provide needed income for Agape. When you register your Kroger Card and your Amazon Smile Account, a portion of your spending will be donated to Agape at no expense to you! You must renew your designated charity with Kroger every year. If you need information on how to register with either Amazon or Kroger, please call Sue Lipscomb. This is a painless way to help Agape with needed funds for client services.



Bus drivers from Bedford County dressed over one hundred Barbie dolls and sorted boxes of donated Christmas cards, helping the Agape center provide Christmas for our community. From left: Vicki Wright, Betty Hurt, and Betty Hess. Not pictured: Dana Brunk.

Former Agape Client Now Volunteers to Serve Others

Sam Hill Green is a success story in many ways. He and his mom were clients at Agape for five years, during most of his middle and high school years. He graduated from Staunton River High School in 2016. Their financial situation had improved to the point where the Greens no longer needed the help from Agape, and now Sam is paying back for the times Agape helped his family by volunteering at Agape.



Sam Hill Green looks ahead to a bright future, serving others.

Sam has been working at Food Lion as a cashier since April and has high hopes for the future. He took “a very important step in January, 2016 when I realized that my eternal future was not certain. I had attended church since I was born, but had never really understood God’s view of me. I began to recognize that being good was not good enough in God’s eyes. For the first time, I realized I was not saved so I sought out the new Pastor, Jason Arthur, at Morgans Baptist Church. He took a lot of time out of his schedule to show me how I could be saved, and I accepted Christ as my Savior and was baptized on January 10, 2016. Now I am so excited to be going on my first mission trip to Guatemala this summer. I will be working with an orphanage, helping with construction projects and helping wherever I am needed.”

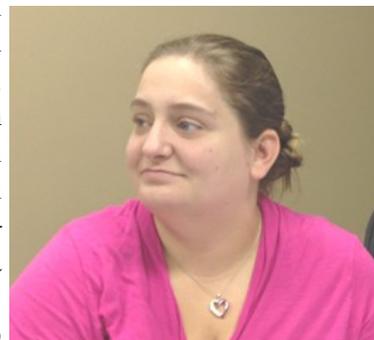
Sam also volunteers at the Agape Center, as a way to repay what his family received. He works wherever needed, most recently repairing bicycles for the children’s Christmas gifts, and in the furniture department, helping load furniture for clients.

“I would like to thank Agape volunteers who have helped me raise funds for my Guatemala mission trip. I thank the Lord for how he provides for Agape. I remember the old building and thank you all for everything you have done for my family and all the families who come there,” Sam concluded. He hopes to be a missionary in the future, but for now, he is satisfied that he can give back in the same organization in his own community that helped his own family in their time of need.

GA Graduation (Continued from page 2)

In honor of the first graduating class, and the construction of a new classroom facility, the first GA class donated a beautifully framed picture with a motivational message on The Essence of Initiative. This will be placed on the new classroom wall as an encouragement to future participants in the Getting Ahead program.

Jessica Flach was the twelfth GA graduate, missing from the Graduation ceremony on December 12—but she had a good reason! Her goal was to



get a job as a daycare teacher, and she did! She was hired to start full-time beginning December 12. She said, “I learned I need to focus on what I can control, and this is a tool I’m using and teaching my own children. I understand that God has a plan for my life, and I am going to follow his plan.” Congratulations to Jessica for taking the steps to achieve her goal!

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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:

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Sponsoring Churches

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| 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 | Westlake Baptist Church |

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