

Where Needs Meet AGAPE Love

May 2018

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 — May13
Thursday — May22
Tuesday — June10
Thursday — June 26

Annual Postal Food Drive

The Postal Food Drive is **May 12** this year. Agape is again privileged to be a recipient of this food drive. Each year, Mail Carriers pick-up groceries that are donated to the Food Drive. The collection point that Agape serves is the Cave Spring Post Office. For every volunteer we provide, 50 pounds of food is donated to our Pantry.

This is a fun event, where an assembly line is set up and as the Mail Carriers deliver the grocery donations back to the Post Office, volunteers sort the groceries into large bins.

Come and help us receive 1000 pounds of food for our clients!

ANNUAL POSTAL FOOD DRIVE

May 12th 3:00 - 5:00 PM

CAVE SPRING POST OFFICE

4069 POSTAL DR, ROANOKE, VA 24018

Cleaning Team Needs Help

Would you be willing to give 1/2 day a month to clean a portion of our facilities? Several volunteers are joining the Cleaning Team, making the work more manageable. Please contact Sue Lipscomb if you can help keep God's facilities clean for our clients and volunteers.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

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

May 12, 2018—ANNUAL POSTAL FOOD DRIVE—3:00 - 5:00 PM—Cave Spring Post Office, 4069 Postal Drive, Roanoke, VA 24018

May 19 — AGAPE CLOSED FOR GOLF TOURNAMENT

May 19, 2018—Agape Center's 14th Annual Golf Tournament—The Westlake—Registration at 12 noon; T-Off at 1 pm. Volunteer or Give! (See Page 9)

The Light in the Dark Pit was AWANA!

Editor's note: As I looked into the beautiful face of Christine Lloyd, I could not fathom the depths from which she had come through God's grace to sit beside me. We were in the break room of Bedford Hospital, where she has worked for eight years as a phlebotomist, the professional name for the one who draws blood from patients.

Christine starkly stated, "Throughout my teen years, my body was bartered by my father to his friend in exchange for drugs to ease his chronic pain. From the time I was thirteen years old until I was sixteen, I was molested in this neighbor's home in my father's presence. When I turned sixteen, I was forced to spend my weekends as companion for this same man on his medium-distance delivery truck runs. He tied me to the bed of the truck's cabin, and after he finished his deliveries, he raped me in every way possible until I was nineteen.

"The only light in this dark pit was that during the week, I and my siblings were allowed to take the church bus to the AWANA (A Workman Approved And Not Ashamed) program at Highland Baptist Church in Lynchburg. Each week, the gospel of Jesus was shared, and every week I was the first to go forward to be saved. I wasn't completely sure what being saved was, but I felt very dirty and for those few days until the next Friday, I felt cleansed after going forward. I think I was 'saved' 13 or 14 times that summer. Once when I went forward, the pastor explained that I only needed to be saved once. But I still needed to feel that cleansing of my dirty body, so I kept going forward. I didn't get baptized until later in life, but that experience at AWANA allowed me to feel God's presence every time I was tied down in the bunk of that cab."

Christine graduated from high school, and was married for twenty years. However, "I went from being controlled by one man to being controlled by another. Though my husband didn't physically abuse me, he cheated on me. During my marriage, I took our daughter to Thomas Road Baptist Church; she liked Sunday School and children's programs, and I felt like going to church would help me. However, there came a time when I was going as a ritual, and not really glean- ing anything from going. Then one day I noticed on the announcement screen an invitation to attend Freedom Ministries – and rape and sexual assault were listed as some of the reasons people attended. I immediately thought that was what I needed to do. For many years, I had been able to repress the memories.

See **LIGHT**, 5



Christine Lloyd is finding healing in Christ!

Responding to God's Voice

April 2018
Families 766
Individuals 2632

April 2017
Families 803
Individuals 2639

Responding to God's Voice

Brandy Burrill—Store, Data
Leslie Burzynski—Furniture, Mentoring
Mike Burzynski—Clothing, Mentoring
Sherry Jones—Pantry
Caria Meerrick — Clothing

May 2018 Volume 10 Issue 5

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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Nearly Thirty Clients have Benefited from Agape's Getting Ahead Program

Since Spring of 2016, Agape has had 29 clients graduate from the Getting Ahead Program, a part of the Building Bridges Out of Poverty community support program, tailored to the needs of the Agape clients. Jan Hogle and Pam Sinex originated the program, with help from other experts in various disciplines, including budgeting and cooking nutritionally and economically. Ongoing Bible study groups are also offered to the participants to help nurture their spiritual journey.

The 2018 spring class graduated four students on Friday, April 20, at a special ceremony held at EastLake Community Church. The graduates were Neva Owens, Judy Jones, Ruby Lawson and Lois Murphy Brown. Pastor Troy Keaton challenged the graduates to consider their journey in terms of a baseball field: "You have just hit the ball, and you are running to first base. The first and most important thing in your life is your relationship with Jesus Christ. But, once that has been established, you continue running to second base, where your relationship with others can either contribute to their well-being or affect others negatively." He proceeded to demonstrate third base as "our relationship with the community in terms of serving others with excellence, whether working or volunteering; and finally, hitting home plate arriving in heaven and hearing Jesus affirm you, saying 'well done'!"



Co-Facilitators Mark and Lin Plumb (on each end) join Getting Ahead Graduates, from left: Neva Owens, Judy Jones, Ruby Lawson, and Lois Murphy Brown.

Mark and Lin Plumb were the co-facilitators of the most recent class, which included a morning at Healing Strides Barn in Boones Mill. This Equine Assisted Learning experience helps the participants to learn more about foundational Getting Ahead concepts in a unique arena/horse environment, leading to personal applications of those concepts.

Each of the graduates shared what they had learned during the 17 weeks of two classes per week, as well as the goals they had set for themselves. Agape takes the program one step further by providing trained mentors to meet with clients monthly along with follow-up sessions with GA facilitators 6 and 12 months after graduation to measure progress. Additionally, clients may volunteer to participate in an ongoing case study, meeting once a quarter for a year with a Getting Ahead facilitator. The goals of the case study project are to support and motivate graduates and to gain valuable information about the long-term impact of the Getting Ahead program.

The Gift Department is seeking donations of new, matching kitchen towels and pot-holders for the adult Christmas Baskets. If you see a sale, think of the gift Baskets, or make a donation and we'll do the shopping for you!



"Coming to Agape is like coming to my second home!"

Shelly Olman
2016 GAP Graduate

Mentor Training: Always an Occasion to Rejoice!

Several training sessions for Mentors occurred in recent weeks. Mentoring every client who comes to Agape is the 'tip of the spear' in accomplishing our mission: to turn or return people to Jesus. The relationships between Agape's Mentors and clients are deep and varied. Here are a few snippets from the Mentors.

See **REJOICE 7**

I love how the Holy Spirit guides the conversations and prayers for and with our clients...sometimes the client doesn't open up, but the Holy Spirit within the room often guides the praying and speaks to their unspoken concerns.

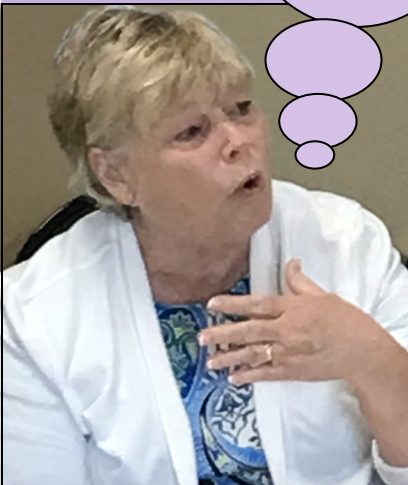
Karen Jones, Assistant Director,
Mentor



I still have thoughts in the midnight hours! A recent widow feels bad that she needs the services of Agape, but she desires so much more for her children.

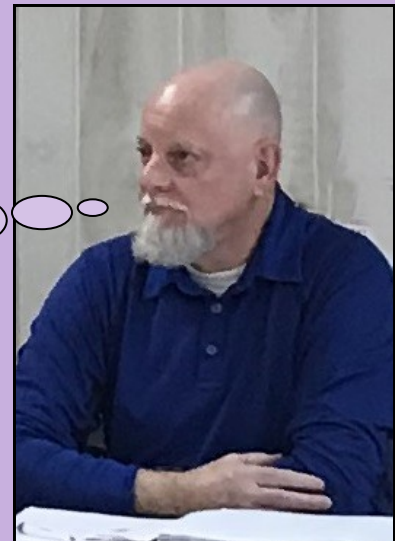
I was able to share Jeremiah 29:11 with her.
Pam Howerton, Mentor,
Floor Supervisor

It's really rewarding to see the Church Referral Program working! Jim Day, Mentor, Floor Supervisor, and Board Member



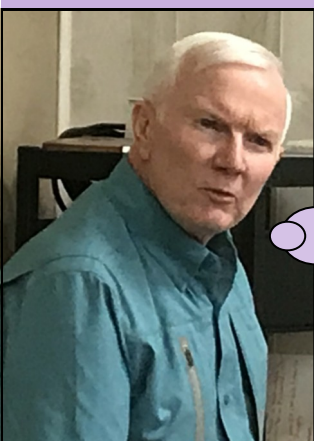
It is so rewarding to see the response for the Getting Ahead Program and to see the changes the clients are making in their lives and in their homes.

Ginny Harris, Mentor



I am so thankful for the ongoing role the Mentors play in the lives of our GAP Graduates. Their ongoing devotion to these clients is incredible. I've travelled all over the world and THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE AGAPE ANYWHERE!

Ron Cordell,
Community Resource Liaison



Following Jesus from Maine to Moneta!

Tarri Novellino's love for the Lord is evident by her huge smile! She and her husband, Dan, moved to Virginia after a remarkable, unmistakable series of miracles regarding the sales of their two homes and other property in the middle of a Maine winter with 40 inches of fresh snow barricading their homes. They had their eyes set on Lynchburg, and after two trips to this area with no word from God, they were disheartened. But, just as they were to leave for the airport to return to Maine, a home popped up on their computer (one that should have been there all along) and they made a quick detour to Moneta, where God confirmed to each of them, "This is your home." They put in an offer and within twenty minutes it was accepted by the owner. They left Maine with no financial or property encumbrances; they were moving to a land they knew nothing of, but felt God's call to relocate here. She says, "I left behind all of my family—mom, aunts, uncles, 2 children and 4 grandchildren, to follow God."

When they got here in August of 2017, the search for a church was on. They attended two churches every Sunday. . . until they got to EastLake Community Church. There they attended the 8:30 am service, and then stayed for the 11 am service. She says, "Again we heard God's voice saying, 'This is your church family.'"

When Tarri and Dan met and began seeing each other, "the first thing he told me is that Christ will be first in this relationship. That was so encouraging and exciting

to me as a new believer. Six months later, they began following Christ together as a married couple. Now, making this move to Virginia was simply following where God was leading us together."



Tarri Novellino's smile signals her love for Jesus Christ, and she sees her work at Agape as an opportunity to share that love with others.

Dan and Tarri soon met with Worship Pastor Ben Peak to express their interest in the music ministry, and in the course of that discussion, he took them to Agape, as another way to serve God in this community. It happened to be a Wednesday, when Agape was closed but many volunteers were working on the new shelving! Tarri felt God's love and presence as soon as she walked through the door. She felt God again saying to her, "This is where you will serve me." She immediately began to volunteer, and currently is doing three jobs: runner, clerking in the store and mentoring. She concludes, "I love running for the Lord at Agape! I have so much fun at Agape, working with people from so many churches and backgrounds, where all

have the same zeal to serve Jesus by serving others. Running is my particular passion; I just love finding the household items for clients, knowing it will give them pleasure and fill a need in their home and in their lives. I love stocking the store and making it appealing to the clients. I am so blessed to be here and I love the joy in all of the volunteers."

LIGHT : AWANA Helped Her Cope FROM 2

"Actually, I feel God put these memories below my consciousness until I was mature enough to deal with what I had been through. I had attended therapy sessions in the past, but unless someone has actually walked the path you have, they cannot truly relate.

"When I went to Freedom Ministries, I found that there were other women who had travelled my journey, and I found great encouragement. From that point on, I felt God was truly leading my life. However, my husband (whom I never told about my pain) couldn't deal with the truth I was now confronting, and that is when our shaky relationship fractured and we divorced. I went to school to become a phlebotomist, but being on my own was financially disastrous. In addition to going to school full-time, I was also working two full time jobs. I was physically and emotionally and financially exhausted. I am truly learning to lean on God, to trust Him in every part of my life. I know He has a good plan for my life, and I am seeking to find it."

Christine recently moved to Franklin County from Lynchburg. She realized she needed help in many material ways, and was thankful to find Agape on the internet. She has been coming to Agape for about six months, and has bonded with her mentor, Karen Jones, where she is finding sustenance in her spiritual journey, and where she is encouraged to keep the image of being God's child in the forefront of her thoughts. While she is still struggling financially, she is thankful that she found an apartment that was more affordable. She is also seeking new employment, where her experience and skills may help financially. And she is trusting God for each step in this new leg of her journey.

Renovation gets a boost with local volunteers



Volunteers from Bedrock-Franklin County worked in the storage shed.
Left: Christian Mackenhiemer and Ross Zabloski organize bikes in the new storage shed.
Right: Kent Turner, Ian Turner, Ross Zabloski, and Heath Kennedy.



Students from the Key Club from Staunton River High School joined us for the second time this school year. This group of young people helps in many different ways in the community as they seek to serve and develop leadership skills. They love working at Agape and so often select this as their service project. Janet Sellers, co-director of the Gift Department says, "Our Department was so blessed to have the Key Club students return to help us on Saturday, April 21st! Much progress was made as they completely cleaned all of the shelving in our new loft where over 2500 Christmas gifts will be stored as we continue to prepare for Christmas, 2018! They carried many toys into their designated section of the loft. We are so grateful for their willingness to give of their time and look forward to their return!"

About 15 volunteers came from Agape's newest Member Church, Bedrock-Franklin County. Pastor Russon Bibbs says, "It was truly awesome to get to serve along side you guys. We were so blessed to get to work with the Agape team." The ladies gave a tremendous boost to the clothing and shoe departments while the guys cleaned and organized the storage shed and did some heavy lifting.



Key Club students cleaned and stocked the loft shelves for toys and gift basket storage.



Paul Hadfield works on shelving in the Gift Department.



SERVING AGAPE CHILDREN'S AGAPE ASSOCIATION

Donna Cosmato has served Agape for over ten years in many roles from reception to runner to mentor. Most recently she has been organizing the Crochet Ministry, relying on ten capable ladies to crochet borders on blankets for the children's Christmas gifts, and throughout the year, creating baby items for babies in our clients' households. She is currently serving in Reception, and is in training to do USDA and Telephones. She says, "I want to be as useful as possible, so cross-training allows me to serve in a variety of departments as needed."

Outside of Agape, Donna was elected for a four-year term to the Franklin County School Board in November, 2017. This is a continuation of her passion for education, and her desire to bring a Christian perspective to the school system. She has been employed and volunteered in a variety of educational roles, from teacher to administration, in private, Christian and public educational systems. She continues to visit classrooms throughout the school system as a member of the School Board, staying close to the students and teachers, experiencing the same joys as teaching, without the responsibilities and stress of teaching.

Donna and her husband, Patrick, serve in leadership at their church, Dwelling Place, and are full-time parents to their grandson, Zach, who will graduate in 2019. She says, "God always gives me the energy and time to fulfill what He's called me to do by serving our community in many ways. Probably the most rewarding 'payback' is when I walk into a classroom and the students excitedly call out, "Miss Donna, Miss Donna."

Donna and Nancy Frazier, work on blankets for the Agape children's Christmas gifts.



Donna Cosmato wears many hats at Agape and in the community.



REJOICE: Mentors Share Joys FROM 4

I love to hear direct answers to Prayers such as the use of hospice for one client, which gives her relief. Another client's husband is in prison for drugs and the wife is being protected and how God is working in this family, providing stability for about a year now. Sherry Revell, Mentor



I am humbled to work here and to see how the clients persevere in very difficult situations—I feel honored to see some of 'my' clients even when I'm working in Data. Cindy Gray, Mentor,



From The Agape Book Shelf

In His Place

By Harry C. Griffith

Diane Davis

Agape Book Reviewer



Steve Long served as Pastor of Incarnation Church. He was faced with the death of Otis Huntington. Otis did maintenance work at the church. He had committed suicide. He left behind a note for Steve saying he couldn't stand being alone anymore and that he was going to be with Jesus. How could Otis, a member of Incarnation Church and a friend be that lonely? Pastor Steve and Skeeter, Otis's dog, were the only ones Otis had!

Pastor Steve was upset that Otis was so lonely and no one knew it! He challenged the church to do as Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, I also send you." He preached that we are to incarnate Christ in our time, being conscious of the presence and power of God within us in all our thoughts and actions. This challenge, to become a living force for Christ, to his prominent but self-satisfied congregation, made many members seek the Pastor's resignation. Through the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and lives of many of the true Christians at Incarnation Church, this challenge was met by many and accepted as Christian discipleship. This self-satisfied congregation began to look outside itself and into the lives of others. No longer would the focus be on the best of us, but on the least of us.

Incarnation Church began to live up to its name!

Editor's Note: Diane Davis is recovering from surgery. Please keep her and her husband Dave in your prayers.

Agape Seeking Christmas by July



The Volunteers in the Gift Department have been working on Christmas basket ideas since last December. They have arrived at the perfect combination of items, and are now seeking help in collecting and arranging the baskets! Janet Sellers, above, holds a sample basket!

"The Christmas basket season is upon us", says Janet Sellers. "Yes, it is true! We are already preparing for the Christmas season. We are hoping that we will have all the items needed by July for the 1200 adult Christmas baskets we will distribute to our clients in December."

Agape is *seeking donations of matching new kitchen towels/potholders, candles, liquid or foaming hand soap. Monetary donations* are accepted and Agape volunteers will do the shopping. Checks may be made payable to the Agape Center and sent to PO Box 573, Moneta, VA 24121, or may be made online by going to the Agape website, www.agapecentersml.org, to make your donation, clicking the donation button for Christmas Baskets.

Agape provides gift baskets for birthdays and at Christmas for clients. The birthday baskets are made of gently used donations, but the Christmas baskets are new, unused items. The Christmas gift baskets are very special as they are often the only gift the adults receive.

Did you know? Agape can use your old newspapers in the store to wrap breakable items for clients. Drop off your newspapers in the store!



Long-time Volunteer Elected to Agape Board



Carol Moyer Joins Agape Board.

Long-time Agape volunteer, Carol Moyer, was elected to a three-year term on Agape's Board of Directors at their April meeting. Carol is the Member Church Liaison, organizing and keeping tabs on referrals of clients to Agape's Member Churches. Since 2011, she has performed many roles; she currently

mentors, assists in bread pick-up weekly, works in the Pantry, on the Cleaning Team, and serves on special events, The Agape Open and the Charity Home Tour. Carol dubs herself a 'lifelong volunteer', having served in many different organizations throughout her adult life. "However," she says, "from the minute I walked into Agape, I felt genuine love expressed; I felt like a member of the team immediately."

The Agape Board meets bi-monthly. Other Board Members include Mentors Carl Grove (President); Jim Day (Vice President); Don Frase (Treasurer); Marti Anderson (Secretary); Bill Griggs; Gene Suggs; and Furniture, Bill Parker, and Sue Lipscomb, Executive Director.

Staffing Changes



Kris McKenzie (left) has returned to Agape, now serving as the Manager of the Shoe Department/Store Stocking. Brenda Beisser (right) continues as Store Manager.

Sheila Saunders' role has been expanded to Manager, Housewares/Intake.



AGAPE'S OPEN—Donate or Volunteer



The Agape Golf Tournament is just around the corner, but you can still participate by volunteering and/or contributing to the Volunteer Sponsor campaign.

Volunteer—help on-site with welcoming, water distribution, or a variety of other roles. We also need help with the after-tournament dinner at Halesford Baptist Church. Contact Bob Winters (484/888-1856) to get involved.

Donate — Agape volunteers are invited to participate by contributing toward the Agape Hole Sponsor. Please give the Hole Sponsor contributions to Sue Lipscomb.