

Where Needs Meet AGAPE Love

March, 2019

March Events: Think Banquet, Forklift

AGAPE MEMBER CHURCHES

Bedrock Church—Franklin
County

Bedrock Community Church

Covenant Fellowship

CrossPointe/Franklin Heights
Baptist Church

Dwelling Place Christian
Fellowship

EastLake Community Church

Flint Hill 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



Set your calendar for March 13, and help Agape purchase an 'inside' forklift to help in our warehouse, Pantry, and Furniture Departments!

And then, plan to join in the Hoedown at Halesford Baptist Church with other volunteers from Agape on March 16th.

AGAPE VOLUNTEER CELEBRATION[®] BANQUET

★ March 16, 2019 ★

Appetizers at 5:30 pm

Dinner at 6:00 pm

Halesford Baptist Church

WEAR YOUR BEST COWBOY
ATTIRE FOR THIS WESTERN ROUNDUP

Please RSVP
(540) 296-0609

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

March 5—Lynchburg-Agape Opens! See page 9

March 13—Roanoke Valley Gives — 12 am to 12 midnight

March 16 – Agape Volunteer Banquet — Halesford Baptist Church —See Above

March 19 – HANG DAY in Clothing Department—9 am to noon

April 1 – Season Change—Store-8 am to noon

May 18 – Agape Golf Tournament—Register at www.agapecentersml.org

"I cannot be shy about what God has done!"

Siliamine Fleury exudes her love for Jesus the moment she opens her mouth and flashes her beautiful smile. She says, "I only want to talk about God with others. He has done so much for me that I cannot keep it to myself! I am a very different woman than the eighteen year old who came to America alone on a boat from Haiti in 1992. I didn't know anyone; I left my entire family behind; I couldn't speak a word of English; and I was very shy. But I cannot be shy about what God has done in my life. Americans have kept me safe. I would probably be dead if I had stayed in Haiti! My country is upside down. Now I live well; I don't worry; I sleep well; my children are doing well." She met her husband shortly after arriving in Florida, and they eventually moved to Virginia.

Her three oldest children are all in college, with one recently graduated. She still has three children at home. She loves coming to Agape because "everyone takes such good care of me and my family. I appreciate all that you do. I especially appreciate the prayers for my sons and my family, and I always enjoy speaking about God's goodness to me."

Her husband, Agneau, was in the first graduation of the Getting Ahead program in 2016. He is working in a job he loves, cooking at Richfield Assisted Living in Salem. She says, "The Getting Ahead program has helped our family so much. Each time Agneau came home from class, he shared everything he was learning. It has helped with educational decisions for our children. As a family, we are aware of more options, and we are managing money better. We owe so much to Agape! We appreciate you very much!"



Siliamine Fleury is always anxious to share her love of Jesus!

Welcome New Volunteers

Sandra Foley — Clothing
Rose Hosenstab — Clothing
Edwin Narwid — Books, Pantry
Eileen Narwid — Books, Clothing

By the Numbers . . .

February 2019

Families 787
 Individuals 2746

February 2018

Families 810
 Individuals 2793

March 2019 Volume 11 Issue 3

The Agape Newsletter is a monthly publication produced by The Agape Center for volunteers, member churches, and other interested individuals and organizations.

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Agape 's FIRST IMPRESSIONS DEPARTMENT Open for Volunteers

The **First Impressions Department** has been launched. Rex and Rose Goodnight have volunteered to head this effort because they are concerned that Agape make a great impression to each person who comes in. Whether a volunteer recruit, a client or a regular volunteer we want that first impression to exist each and every time people come!

Is cleanliness really related to our relationship with God? Well, it seems so, because the Bible admonishes the Jews to be clean, spiritually and physically, over 250 times in the Old Testament – and the majority of these refer to clean hands! So what does that have to do with Agape?

An oft-heard saying from our own Book of Suetonius is that 'Cleanliness is close to Godliness'. And actually, Sue (Lipscomb) didn't invent this concept or this phrase. It seems to go back into ancient Hebrew writings. It was popularized by John Wesley in one of his sermons when he said, "Slovenliness is no part of religion. Cleanliness is indeed next to Godliness."

And what does that mean to Agape? We often hear that the prayers of the Agape volunteers, their love, their compassion, their Godliness if you will, is what makes this organization appealing and attractive to our clients. Taking this concept one step further, first impressions always create the first opinion, whether it is how a person looks, or how a building is maintained.

What can we all do to help the First Impressions Team? Check out the suggestions on page 5.

The Department is organized to accommodate weekly or bi-weekly volunteers for 1-2 hours. You can volunteer whenever it is convenient for you – either extending your scheduled shift, or coming on a day that Agape is not open. You could also be a 'sub', a substitute, for when there are unfilled shifts due to illness or vacation. This would be an occasional rotational schedule if enough people would volunteer. A First Impressions Specialist would select an area of interest from the choices below and work on your own schedule, either weekly, or every other week.

See **First Impressions**, 5



Rose and Rex Goodnight have been at Agape for five years, and have served in many areas. Both serve as Runners. They also serve as First Impression Co-Directors and also as department staff. Rex also does Pantry pick-ups and special donation pick-ups.

Openings for First Impressions Specialists

- ♦ Vacuum/mop the public areas of the main building (not Mentor rooms).
- ♦ Dust public areas, administrative offices, and gift shop. (Wet wipe as needed.)
- ♦ Clean Volunteer Break Room; clean kitchen area (counter, refrigerator), meeting room, and bathrooms in Agape Annex.
- ♦ Vacuum/mop Mentor rooms, USDA Office, and Store.
- ♦ Mop and clean bathrooms (front and rear) in main building, replace all paper products. Empty trash and cigarette butts in front entrance. Empty trash in reception areas and gift shop (if not done by those department volunteers).

Select the job you want to do and contact Rose to select your time! You can text or email Rose Goodnight at rex-androse@gmail.com or 913/302-7256.

See other ways you can help maintain a Great First Impression of Agape on Page 5.

Volunteer Recommends Agape; the Rest is History

Becky Galeota and her husband vacationed at Smith Mountain Lake for thirty years, while she worked as a Registered Nurse in West Virginia. She retired and they moved here full-time, meeting Agape Mentor and Floor Supervisor, Marcia Miedema in their cell group from CrossPointe Church. Although Becky had donated items to Agape, she didn't realize what the ministry was all about; when she took the tour of Agape, she then faced a bigger challenge—not *whether* to volunteer, but *which* department. They all looked so interesting.

Becky has been at Agape about two months, and is in training to be a Mentor; in the meantime she has been a tremendous help in the Library and in the Toy Department. She said, "I love the caring and compassion I see from the volunteers. Having worked in a profession where I was caring for people and meeting their needs for thirty years, I see that compassion throughout the ministry. I really enjoy working in the Library. I haven't met Bonnie Fiori (Director of the Library who has been recovering from surgery) yet but I can't wait to do so, because it is so organized and easy to find books and other resources. But I also love working in Toys. I wash the toys, wash the doll clothes, and try to spruce them up to look as good as new. I think about who will receive each toy basket, and always put an age-appropriate book in each basket."

Becky continued, "I am amazed at the volume of items that are donated to Agape and it is wonderful to live in a community that gives such support to this organization. It is so well-organized here and everyone gets the privilege of serving according to their gifts and interests."

Becky relates a story from Christmas that was so refreshing to her. "During the holidays, we had baskets stored to the ceiling and we were so busy. There's not really an order to the contents of the baskets, but one day a grandmother came in looking for a Grinch doll—it was the only thing her grandchild wanted. I wondered where to even start looking for this specific item, so I prayed quickly, asking God to help me find an appropriate substitute for a Grinch! Ten seconds later, I walked into the aisle and a basket had fallen from the top shelf, which I could not have even reached. As I looked it over, planning to reshelve it, I noticed it had a Grinch doll! I was so thankful that God takes care of every detail of our lives!"



Marcia Miedema and Becky Galeota have become good friends in their home group and now as they get to volunteer together at Agape.

WHY I SERVE ...



I love the way things are done at Agape. I love mentoring and praying with clients, and I am thankful to be a part of an organization that provides financial, household and clothing assistance as well."

Ginny Harris, Moneta Mentor
Volunteer since 2013

SHOP FOR YOURSELF; LET KROGER AND AMAZON GIVE TO AGAPE

Just sign up on your Kroger card, and a portion of all your purchases will be donated to Agape.

Same thing with Amazon—Go to smile.amazon.com and register for Agape Moneta/SML, and a portion of all your purchases will be donated to Agape.

**No Muss; No Fuss;
nothing else for you to do!
Just Do it Today!**





From The Agape Book Shelf

Dancing in the Rain

By Kimberly Fowler

Diane Davis
Agape Book Reviewer

MaDee Boxler was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma when she was twenty years old. This book is MaDee's memoir taken from her personal writings. It was written after a promise from her mother and sister that they would complete this book for her.

MaDee's plan was to finish college, work for the FBI, marry and have children, and have a good life. However, she ended up with cancer. She lost her love, her hair, and her life as she knew it. MaDee fought hard, but the cancer fought harder.

MaDee had all the treatments available, but in the end, they all failed her. She spent her last two years suffering the horrible side effects of her chemo treatments. The one thing that kept her going was her love and faith in her Lord.

As her organs began to shut down, as her life here neared the end, MaDee knew she was going home. She had accepted her fate and had given it all over to her Lord.

When MaDee's spirit left the room, everyone knew she had gone home. She was all better now. She was with her Lord. "For I will restore health to you and heal your wounds..." Jeremiah 30:17 "And a little child shall lead them." Isaiah 11:6

Reviewer's Note: This is a beautiful story of a beautiful, courageous girl. Having experienced the horrible side effects of chemo myself, I can certainly understand some of how MaDee felt. There are times when the only help you do have does come from your faith in your Lord. I only pray if and when my own time comes, that I can have the courage this young woman had. A wonderful read for anyone with serious health problems, or for anyone who has a loved one seriously ill. In other words, for every one! Much Love and God Bless, Diane Davis

What we can each do to help make GREAT FIRST IMPRESSIONS

FROM 3

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Colossians 3:23

First, keep your area of work clean and tidy. Empty trash. Pick up litter. Wipe up spills.

Secondly, you are empowered to help keep other areas tidy as well. Have you ever noticed the cigarette butts as you walk in the front door? You are welcome to empty them in a trash container. Have you ever noticed crumbs and other food stuffs in the Volunteer Break Room? You are welcome to wipe the counter down, empty the trash, and throw out leftovers!

Thirdly, you can volunteer to help in the First Impressions Department. The Department is organized to accommodate weekly or bi-weekly volunteers for 1-2 hours. You can volunteer whenever it is convenient for you – either extending your scheduled shift, or coming on a day that Agape is not open. You could also be a 'sub', a substitute, for when there are unfilled shifts due to illness or vacation. This would be an occasional rotational schedule if enough people would volunteer. A First Impressions Specialist would select an area of interest from the choices on [page 3](#) and work on your own schedule, either weekly, or every other week.

Future Farmers from Liberty High School Served Many Departments at Agape in February



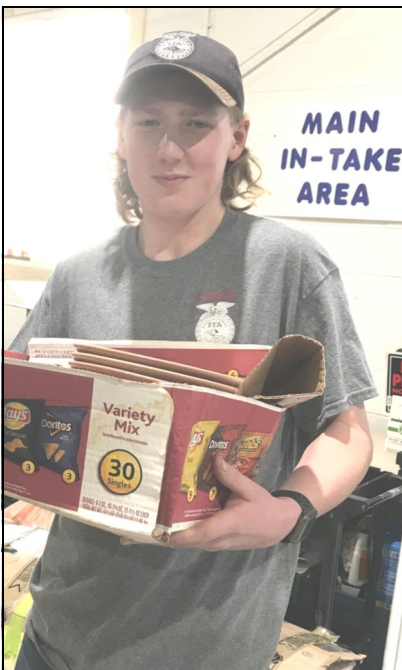
Above Joel Witt, 10th grade, bags dog food for clients.



Above left Kate Robertson, 10th grade, and Harley Spencer, 10th grade, help select items for clients in the Runner Department.



Right, Zane Shepherd, 11th grade and Makenna Garrett, 9th grade, sort donated canned goods.
Below, Josh Leamy, 11th grade, unloads donated items.



Above left, Scott Wood, 11th grade and Raymond Clemons, 11th grade, select toys for gift baskets.

Left Logan Asal, 9th grade, discusses toy options with Agape Toy Director, Carol Francis.

Ron Cordell Named to Agape Board of Directors

Ron Cordell has been named to the Board of Directors of the Agape Center. He and his wife, Sharen, are from the same small town in Georgia and have been married for over 40 years. Ron retired from a twenty-eight year career with the US Army, and then worked ten years with Deloitte Consulting. The Cordells moved to the lake area in 2016. Both are active at EastLake Community Church and Ron has supported the Agape Center by assisting with the Getting Ahead classes and helping set up the computerized Community Resource Database. Ron also loves to teach personal financial management and has been a coordinator for the Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University course for over 12 years.



Ron says, "Agape is an amazing place and I am humbled to be a small part of this God-directed ministry." Ron's life verse is Matthew 5:16, *Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father in Heaven.* He says, "It is a blessing to shine the light of God's love into our clients at Agape."

Ron Cordell has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Agape Center. He has volunteered in many capacities at Agape, most notably as the co-developer of the computerized Community Resource Directory and with the Getting Ahead Program.

Future Farmers Learn Leadership Skills by Serving Others

FROM 6

The Future Farmers of America (FFA) celebrated its 91st anniversary the third week in February. Spencer Blankenship, Agriculture Mechanics teacher and FFA sponsor at Liberty High School (LHS), explained that the FFA focuses on preparing high school students for leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural programs. Thirteen of the seventy-plus members of Liberty's FFA spent an entire day at Agape, helping in various departments. Spencer continued, "The students enjoyed their experience at Agape and were amazed at how large and well-organized the place was. They were impressed at how many people are served through Agape." This was the first time the FFA came to Agape, and Spencer said, "We thank Agape for the opportunity to serve in our local community and look forward to returning."



Above left, Victoria Rios 11th grade, and right, Hailey Carhart, 9th grade, hung clothing donations at Agape.



Spencer Blankenship teaches Agriculture Mechanics and serves as sponsor for the Future Farmers of America at Liberty High School.

FORGOTTEN AGAPE BOONES



Ricky Thomas, an Agape Mentor since 2013, has a passion for Jesus and for His creation! He was introduced to the wonders of God's creation through a neighbor as a young boy, and now he shares that zeal with others. Founding the Roanoke Valley Outdoor Ministry in the late 1980's after a 'Moses' encounter with God, the association has evolved into Creation Speaks Outdoor Ministry, an area-wide organization which seeks to draw people closer to their Creator through events.

Ricky was on an elk-hunting expedition when he encountered God about 10,000 feet up in the mountains of Colorado. He prayed, telling God, "I don't know how to do a lot of things, but I love the outdoors You have created, and my deep desire is to reach people for Christ. Show me how I can do that." When he returned home, he got the blessing of his pastor (in Roanoke at that time) and fourteen guys showed up to start this effort. They've held archery shoots, hunter safety classes, canoe trips on the James River, events for children, and a host of other outdoors opportunities.

Creation Speaks is collaboration between several churches, with a focus on events and God's Word. They are hosting a wild game dinner at Goodview Baptist Church on Saturday, March 9, at 6 pm, and looking for other ways to reach the community.

A Creation Speaks meeting is held the first Monday of each month at EastLake Community Church from 6:30-8 pm. There "the guys are welcome to come in their camouflage. We watch a sportsman-type video and then take a step back and talk about a different topic each time."

"It is a joy to take something that you love and point others to the Person you love. God has given everyone a gift or talent that can be used for His Kingdom. When you influence someone for Christ, it will be the only thing that will last for eternity. Our goal is to minister to men who have similar interests, and to pass these skills and abilities on to young boys and teens who perhaps don't have a male influence in their lives to show them the wonders of God's creation."

If you are interested in being a part of this ministry or participating in the wild game dinner, contact Ricky Thomas: (phone or text) 540/814-9462 or email rickythomas5@gmail.com.



Servants: Agape & Beyond

This column (left) highlights Agape volunteers who are also serving our community in other ways. If you know of someone working at Agape who is involved in other organizations or ministries, please contact karenbak-er015@gmail.com or at 540/797-7996.

Free Tax Preparation Assistance

Free Income Tax assistance is available through the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). Tax-Aide is a free income tax preparation and electronic filing service provided to older and low-income taxpayers. The service is provided in Bedford, Westlake, Rocky Mount, and Boones Mill as follows:

February 1 – April 14 in Rocky Mount
- at the Essig Recreation Center at 295 Technology Drive near the YMCA. Call (540) 483-9238, Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 pm to schedule Thursday and Friday appointments.

February 4 - April 11 at the Bedford Public Library, North Bridge Street. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:30am - 12:30pm.

February 5 – April 16 at the Westlake Library at Westlake Towne Center. Tuesdays only, at the Westlake Library, Westlake Towne Center. No appointment required, but you can schedule an appointment in person at the library on Tuesdays during the tax season from 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm.

February 20, March 13, and April 10 at Boones Mill Baptist Church, 10 Whispering Creek Road. Beginning Jan 21, call (540) 334-5404, Monday-Friday, 9:00 am – 4:30 pm to schedule Wednesday appointments.

Agape Lynchburg Opens

The Agape Center – Lynchburg opened on March 5, 2019. Located at 3026 Carroll Avenue, the Center will be open Tuesdays from 9 am to 2 pm and the third Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm.

The vision of Tabitha North, now the Executive Director, has been over two years in the planning and development. Prior to that, Tabitha and her family had prayed for about five years in response to a message from their church, Blue Ridge Community Church in Forest, which challenged people to live out their faith and make an impact in their own communities. The family began praying for how to serve the Lynchburg community and launched Treasure Seekers, a service run from the North's home, collecting and distributing food, household goods and furniture. At times, they were also able to provide financial assistance through donations.

But they knew the home-run operation was not sustainable, as the donated goods overtook the family's living space and consumed enormous family time. Tabitha continued to pray for God's guidance in how to make this more efficient when she learned of the Agape Center in Moneta. Sue Lipscomb, the Executive Director, describes the first time Tabitha visited the Moneta site, "she just started crying, saying, 'this is exactly what we need'." So began a journey of recruiting committed volunteers, board members and church partners who trained at the Moneta site, began searching for a Lynchburg site, and then preparing the rented building for operation, following the model of Agape-Moneta.

Tabitha explained, "We are doing some things that are uniquely tailored for the Lynchburg community. For example, the Moneta site is staffed primarily by volunteers who are retired. The Lynchburg Center is staffed primarily by working and parenting volunteers, so our hours reflect that. We also have a different configuration of our clothing, providing specific rooms for men's, women's and children's items. Also, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, which serves Lynchburg, provides different food items, so we've separated our USDA and Community pantries, and clients will self-select their food items."

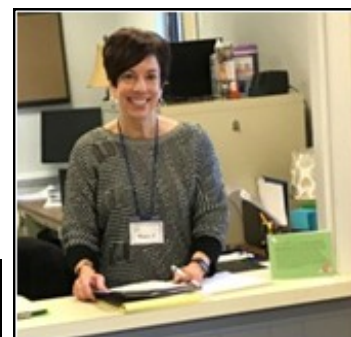
The Lynchburg Agape held a 'mock opening' where experienced volunteers from Moneta came and acted as clients, giving the Lynchburg volunteers the opportunity for a practice run. Tabitha concluded, "The centerpiece of the Lynchburg Agape Center is the mentoring program, which is patterned after the Moneta Center. Our mentors have been trained and mentored by the Moneta volunteers, and our a focus remains the same as Moneta's: to allow people the opportunity to experience the Agape (unconditional) love of Jesus and to turn or return to a Christ-centered life."



Tabitha North, left, is the Executive Director of the Agape Center – Lynchburg. Below: Cindy Johnson, right, was the site organizer/decorator for the Agape Center. Now that the Center is open, she has transitioned to Director of Mentoring. She is shown mentoring 'client', Carol Moyer, during the mock opening.



Above, the Children's room. Right, Mary Craig is the Director of the Reception Department.



Above left, Tracy Sullivan, Co-Director of Clothing, is preparing packets of cookies as the volunteers bring cookies and good will to their neighbors. Above right, Robin Maddox is the Co-Director of the Clothing Department. Below right, Debby Kountz, Director of the Pantry, shows off the fully stocked Community Pantry. Not pictured: Susan Gallagher, USDA; Pete Sullivan, IT; Tom Chaffin, Treasurer; and Richard Craig, Facilities.

