



Where Needs Meet Love

October, 2016

By the Numbers Served . . .

September, 2016

837 Families
2772 Individuals

September, 2015

767 Families
2434 Individuals

FEED A FAMILY FOR THANKSGIVING



Special Donations

- \$1091 from Kroger Cards
- \$680 from Spartan Race (See story page 8)

Welcome New Volunteers

Renee Bach – Toys/Clothing
Ruth Craft – Baskets
Kayla Goff – Pantry
Trevor Gordon – Furniture, Pick-up
Jennifer Grizzle - Runner
Linda Leedy – USDA, Telephones, Reception
Tammy Pauley – Pantry
Janice Payne – Baskets
Lucy Schmidt –Data
Bruce Smith – Pantry, Mentoring
Darby Smith – USDA, Telephones
Allen Stout – Pantry
Joshua Widener – Furniture

Help our clients join in the American tradition of a turkey dinner with trimmings for Thanksgiving. For just \$25, a full dinner is provided for each Agape family. Go online at www.agapecentersml.org to make your tax-deductible contribution, or clip the coupon on page 8 of the newsletter and send or bring to the Agape Center.

GIFT BASKET VOLUNTEERS

Look for this special tag throughout the newsletter for our special, seasonal volunteers who are coming as groups to help make the Agape Christmas gift baskets for our clients.

Mark your Calendar . . .

October 29 – 10:30 am – Ride for Hope – Meet at Radford Baptist Church to ride the 60 mile route to benefit Agape. (See Story page 3)

November 12 – 1:30-7 pm --Singing for Agape --A benefit concert of Blue Grass/Gospel music is being presented by volunteer Becky Blankenship and her extended family. This concert will provide funds for construction at The Agape Center. (See Story page 3)

GOD Stories

Near Death to Abundant Life in Christ

Judy Caldwell is overflowing with love for Jesus and awe for how He not only saved her life, but gave her a higher purpose for her life. She says, “I was working at a job I loved as general manager at Hardees, and earning a good income. I had started as a part-time biscuit maker, and advanced to general manager. My job gave me confidence, affirmation, responsibility, and a good income. My job was my greatest priority in my life, ahead of family, God, church, even my husband.

“However, I lost my mother-in-law in December, 1999, and then in February, 2000, I lost my dad. That was also the year my two sons got into trouble with the law. I began to hate the job I had loved, and by spring, I had spiraled into a deep depression and wanted to die.

“I was admitted to the psychiatric department at Roanoke Memorial Hospital. From my bed, I reached into the table beside my bed and found a Bible placed there by the Gideons. For the first time in many years, I began to read God’s word, and recalled from my earlier days how much God loved me. I was drawn to John 3:16 and Matthew 22:37.

“I also began to see how I had allowed my job to replace God and my family, as I had put them on the back burner of my life. I returned to my church, Beulah Baptist, and began to understand my identity in Jesus Christ.

“At the time, I didn’t know why God didn’t just let me die, but God knew that my husband was going to be sick and need my attention before he went home to be with God. God also knew that my grandson’s parents were involved in drugs and that I would be given custody of him at 6 months of age. I have been given

custody of two grandchildren, now 13 and 8 years old. If I had been successful in taking my life, I wouldn’t have been here for them. My daughter, who wasn’t supposed to be able to have children, became pregnant at 40. She delivered eight weeks early, and I wouldn’t have been here for them. I began to see that God had a plan for my life and I needed to allow Him to lead me.

“God has blessed me so much in how to deal with deaths of husband and parents, my sons’ problems. In fact, my youngest son accepted Jesus as his Savior while he has been in prison. If it had not been for God, I would have driven my truck off the road in 2000. I would have missed the birth of my grandchildren. I would not have seen my son put his life in order and become a father to his children.

“I now understand my priorities and see God guide each step, each day. Even in my worst moments, I have seen God walk before me. I realize now that in spite of my problems, there are others who have even more problems, and they don’t have Jesus in their lives to help them

“I’ve been going to Agape for almost a year now, and it has helped to put food on the table for my grandchildren, clothing for all of us, and given me spiritual support as the mentors have prayed for me and encouraged me to stay on the right path with Jesus. Because of the help I’ve received, I am encouraged to give back, and have volunteered for the Charity Home Tour; once the grandchildren are older, I hope to become even more involved in volunteering at Agape.”



Judy Caldwell is ready to tell anyone, anywhere about her relationship with Jesus!

GIFT BASKET VOLUNTEERS



Carol Hallock, far right, and ten friends created 219 Christmas baskets on a recent Monday morning. Pictured about are from left: Melanie Besser, Stephanie Childress, Leah Holic, Russetta Wright, and Carol Hallock. Helpers not pictured are Bonnie Wilson, Carole Moyer, Paula Vandergrif, Susanne Connors, Phyllis Willis and Barbara Mullins. Organizer of the Monday Basket Ladies, Carol Hallock says, “Of course we couldn’t do any of this without the time spent to help us by Janet (Sellers) and Eileen (Hawkins). They are a blessing!

RESPONDING TO GOD'S VOICE

Training Up a Child . . .

Stephanie Childress wears many hats at Agape, and is following in her mother's steps by passing along the legacy of serving others to her son, Faelan. Stephanie's mother, Kitty Tabor, has been a manager at Feeding America Southwest Virginia for over eighteen years. As a child, Stephanie would often volunteer at the food bank, under the tutelage of her mom. "My mother has been an inspiration to me because she has been in her job since she was twenty-two years old. She has no plans to retire anytime soon because she loves the work she does," exudes Stephanie.

When Stephanie first moved to this area from Danville, Virginia, she asked people from her SML Seventh-Day Adventist Church where there might be a good place to serve. She had most recently volunteered with God's Pit Crew in Danville, so was hoping there might be similar opportunities here. Through a long-time volunteer, Nancy Tomsick, Stephanie was guided to Agape. As it turns out, Nancy had been with Agape for many years before she was unable to continue volunteering herself, so now her focus is on recruiting new volunteers.

Stephanie continues, "It's been an amazing journey. I'm so excited to be a part of God's hands and feet. A bonus is being able to experience this with my son by my side. He is learning so much. School is about to start back up again and he's going to have so much to tell his friends. Sometimes things can get really busy at Agape, but it is worth every second. Each and every person does such an amazing job. God's hands are all over this building. I'm so blessed to be a part of this ministry."

Stephanie has been with Agape for about eighteen months. She recently accepted

additional responsibility serving as co-director of the clothing department (with Monica Bergman), is a runner (selecting requested household items and packing them up for clients), a clerk in the store during the summer months when she can bring her son, Faelan. During the school year, she adds mentoring to her duties at Agape.

This past summer, Faelan has been a regular in the toy department. He is eight years old and in the third grade at Huddleston Elementary. Faelan is the 'toy tester'. He figures out each toy, and then explains to the volunteers what the toy does and how it works. If

it is broken but still playable, it is put on the free table. Otherwise, most toys become gifts, especially at Christmas. Stephanie radiates as she talked about her son's experiences: "Faelan takes his job very seriously, and when there are other children volunteering, he tries to set a good example and shows them things they can do to help.

Faelan has had some interesting experiences with toys this summer. On one occasion, there was a boy who had diabetes and was having his leg amputated. "So I put together a Lego set, so at least he would smile when he saw it," Faelan beamed enthusiastically.

Stephanie said, "Of all the jobs I do. . . I enjoy them all! I enjoy putting clothing pieces together to make smart outfits! I really enjoy mentoring and working in the store, where I can interact with people. I especially enjoy making people feel welcome as they come into the store.

TRAINING continued page 5



Stephanie and Faelan Childress serve together at Agape whenever Faelan is not busy with school.



Faelan is very meticulous about each part working as he assembles toys for Agape clients' children.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S VOICE

Two VOLUNTEER Events Slated to Raise Funds for Agape

Radford Baptist Church Sponsors Ride for Hope October 29

Radford Baptist Church of Moneta is teaming up with forming chapter of the Christian Motorcyclists Association (CMA) at the lake to sponsor a Ride for Hope to benefit Agape's building program. The Ride will take place on Saturday, October 29, with registration beginning at 10:30 am and kickstands up at 11:30 am. The cost is \$15 per biker, plus \$5 for passengers. Event pins will be provided to the first 100 registrants. The Ride for Hope will be a police-escorted, 60-mile route beginning in Bedford County, starting at Radford Baptist Church at 1293 Radford Church Road in Moneta, through Franklin County to Pittsylvania County.

The reverse route will return the bikers to the church for a free lunch provided by the church and a message of hope. The event is open to all bikers.

This is the second annual Ride for Hope with last year's event drawing over eighty bikers. Pastor Karl Hofheinz said, "Last year the bikers were asking who the beneficiary of the ride was! So as we planned this year's ride, we immediately thought of the Agape Center, which has the same heartbeat as the CMA, demonstrating Christ's love and sharing the hope of salvation for all. We strongly believe and support what Agape does, and felt this was a good fit for our desire to see our community receive the hope that both CMA and Agape provide."



Steve LeMay, Organizer of
Ride for Hope

Event organizer Steve LeMay says, "We decided to make this second event a fundraiser for the Agape Center because they are known in the community for offering hope to hurting people, and that is the mission of our CMA chapter as well. Because we believe that Jesus is the answer to every need and offers hope in every situation, we share that hope with our biking community."

"Last year's message of hope was especially powerful as one of our bikers shared about the devastating loss of his wife to cancer. Redd McIntyre's love of his life, Denise, bravely battled cancer for several months before the disease overtook her on May 8, 2015. Redd shared how even though she didn't survive on this earth, he believes this is not the end, and described the reason he has the assurance of seeing her again. Even through his tears and pain, Redd has hope, and that is what we want to communicate to others. No matter what they are facing, Jesus provides comfort and hope," LeMay concluded.

In case of rain, lunch will be served at 12:00 and a message of hope will be given at Radford Baptist Church. All proceeds from the event will be donated to the building program currently underway at the Agape Center. For more info about the event, search Ride for Hope on Facebook or contact Steve at oldparts@resurrectioncycle.com.



GOSPEL/BLEU GRASS CONCERT NOVEMBER 12

A musical family is sponsoring a Gospel/Blue Grass concert to raise funds for the Agape Center's expansion project. The concert will be held on Saturday, November 12, beginning at 1:30 pm at Glenwood Center, 2074 Smith Mountain lake Parkway, Huddleston, VA 24104.

CONCERT continued page 5



Over 80 Bikers participated in the 2015 Ride for Hope.



J & J Gospel Band members from left: Benny Blankenship, Jr. Blankenship, Jean Nicholas, and Clifton Paxton. 4

RESPONDING TO GOD'S VOICE

CONCERT continued from page 4

The J&J Gospel Band will perform at 1:30 and 5 pm; the Family Grass Band will perform at 2:30 and 6 pm. There will be a silent auction and refreshments for sale.

Becky Blankenship, a six-year volunteer at Agape, was so excited to learn that a new storage area was being considered that she quickly scheduled her family's two bands to help raise money for this utility barn.

Blankenship says, "For two years, I've been tripping over bicycles, and to resolve this problem, I thought, we need a bike shop! We need a place to repair and clean donated bikes and then to store the bikes. I suggested this idea and even offered to help raise money for it. When I learned that a pole barn was coming, I was so excited. Now our bikes will have a good home!" The utility barn will also provide needed storage space for lawn and garden equipment and supplies.

All funds raised at the concert will be donated for the construction of the utility pole barn. Come for all or part of the afternoon and enjoy the Family Grass and the J&J Gospel Bands.

TRAINING continued from page 3

Stephanie concluded, "I truly enjoy every job, but mostly, I love being at Agape as it is a place where Christians from all different denominations come together and love people. We are truly His hands and feet in this ministry to our community."



Family Grass Band members from left: Jack Blankenship, Bonnie Blankenship, Spencer Blankenship and Brian Yatsko.

GIFT BASKET VOLUNTEERS



Members of EastLake Community Church's Stouffer small group came on a Sunday afternoon. From left: Ronnie Wilkerson, Joyce Wilkerson, Alice Meador, Ed and Mattie Young, Bailey Ratcliff, Sheldon Smith, Alice Peverall, and Bobbie Davenport.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S VOICE

Shadow Volunteer~ Donna Cosmato

Serving in the Shadows



Donna Cosmato always takes her crochet project wherever she goes so she can keep up with the demand at Agape.

Donna Cosmato had been an Agape volunteer since 2010, serving as a mentor, clerking in the store, and as a receptionist. Then came surgery with a long recovery period, and aging parents and in-laws who required more attention. The time had come when she could no longer come to the Agape Center on a regular basis. Yet, she desired to continue her involvement, and the idea of using a talent from her childhood emerged.

Since she was ten years old, Donna had found pleasure in crocheting items. Once everyone in her circle of family and friends had all they could use, Donna realized that she needed to expand her horizons. She had crocheted items, particularly baby layettes, for the pregnancy crisis center and for the Navy Relief Society while living in Norfolk, Virginia, and thought perhaps her skills could be used for Agape. It was an opportunity Agape could not refuse, so with yarn donated to Agape, Donna began

making items for the clients. For the past two years, Donna has provided gloves, hats and scarves for Agape clients. More recently, she has begun making lap blankets and baby blankets, which are used as client gifts.

Donna's mother lives in Indiana, so when she visits, they crochet together. However, Donna takes it a step further, sending donated yarn to her mom by mail, and her mother mails the completed items back to Donna for use at Agape. Donna says, "A lot of times unfinished projects are donated, and we either complete them, or perhaps use them in conjunction with another item. If we can't incorporate them, we at least can use the yarn in other projects. We use every scrap of yarn we have!"

"Last year, about half the blocks were donated for a granny square afghan. This is a blanket made up of individual squares and then crocheted together to make a blanket. I mailed the squares to my mom and she called back to tell me the unbelievable, remarkable story of how God provided. Mom looked in her closet of excess yarn and she had the exact colors and the exact dye lots of the yarn that was in these donated square blocks. Mom had purchased this yarn in 1975, and the donation of unfinished squares came in 2015! God provided this yarn 30 years ago, so that she had just enough yarn of the matching colors to finish this afghan in 2015!"

Donna continued, "Just when I think I am at the end of my yarn, God drops another bundle of yarn for me to crochet just one more item."

Donna has a system of receiving the donated yarn from a friend at her church, Dwelling Place, on Sundays, and replacing the yarn with completed crocheted items by Wednesdays. She explained her commitment to crocheting for Agape: "I wanted to be involved in the Agape ministry, and if I couldn't do it on-site, I was willing to serve in the shadows. Having been a mentor, I have seen first-hand the good that Agape has been able to do in the community, the love and care provided for each client and I admire that. I know personally that God is using this ministry for His purposes and His honor. For this season of my life, I am thankful that this is where God is having me serve."

RESPONDING TO GOD'S VOICE

GIFT BASKET VOLUNTEERS



Russetta Wright's Bible study came in two shifts. This Wednesday morning group made up 200 baskets. From left: Cindy Cartright, Beth Maye, Dawn Gallogly, and Carolyn Hannabass.



Pam Morris, Telephones, (left) and Karen Jones, Assistant Director, showed up on a Saturday ready to root for their favorite teams, who unfortunately are fierce competitors. That didn't taint their spirit of unity at Agape, working side by side in their small office.



SPARTAN ATHELETE RAISES FUNDS FOR AGAPE

Pastor Rock Chocklett completed his Super Spartan Race of over eight miles and twenty obstacles in September. The race was held in Wintergreen, Virginia. He will advance to the third and final level of the Spartan Race next year. He raised nearly \$700 from his supporters for Agape.



Pastor Rock volunteers in Furniture Pick-up.

Please Help Provide Needed Gift Items That Many Consider Basic Necessities!

Especially needed are men's items and XL to XXXX sizes for men and women. For a full listing of needed items, please visit the Agape website at <http://www.agapecentersml.org>

October, 2016

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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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Staunton Baptist Church

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Dinner for Thanksgiving 2016 - \$25.00/ Family

Each Thanksgiving Dinner includes Turkey, Green Beans,
Corn, Potatoes and Stuffing

I would like to sponsor _____ families.

Total amount \$ _____

Send your tax-deductible check payable to the Agape Center,
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OR Donate online at: www.agapecentersml.org