



2017 Annual Report





Our Mission

Our Mission is to join communities, build and strengthen neighbor relations, and work side-by-side with residents to address community-wide concerns and to link resources supportive of a healthy, safe and economically comparable standard of living.

Our Philosophy

Our Philosophy is to nurture inclusive communities, unite to create support networks and determine the necessary strategic actions to address chronic, but preventable, problems.



Vocational training support program in War, West Virginia, 2017

Our Programs

Our Programs focus on partnering with community-based efforts that target the emergency needs of severely poverty-stricken families and individuals in rural Appalachia, including food, shoes, winter coats, medical assistance, school supplies, utilities assistance and home repairs for families, people with disabilities, elderly individuals, and veterans who suffer due to economic and physical hardship. In addition, our programs focus on the future of children by supporting after school programs, summer camps and enrichment programs, summer food programs, youth mentorship, vocational training, and bridging the digital divide. ★



Left: Barefeet program in Gainesville, Georgia, 2017

Front cover: Summer enrichment program in Beattyville, Kentucky, 2017

To the loyal supporters of Americans Helping Americans® from Founder Eugene Krizek

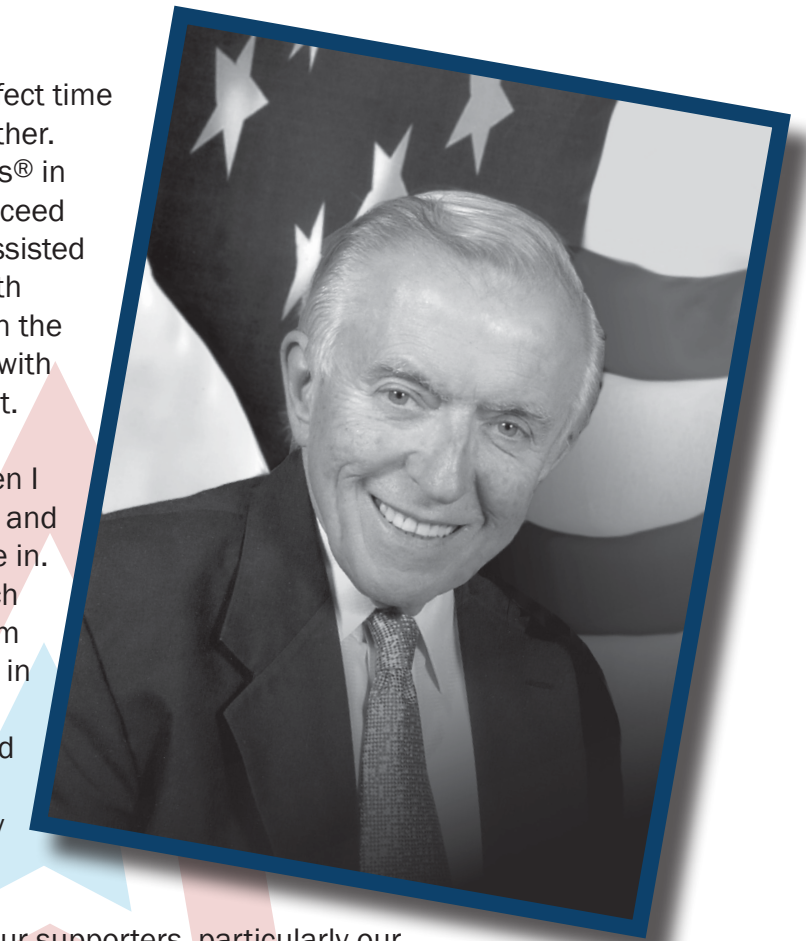
As I approached my 90th birthday, it was the perfect time to reflect on what we all have accomplished together. Since incorporating Americans Helping Americans® in 1990, we have helped thousands of children succeed in school by supporting after school programs; assisted senior citizens living on meager fixed incomes with repairs to their house, enabling them to remain in the home they love; and provided tens of thousands with winter coats, blankets and shoes to those without.

I will never forget that day in the early 1980s when I first visited hard-hit communities in West Virginia and observed the conditions our fellow Americans live in. One man, as I entered his house, told me to watch my step because his floor was rotted through. I am honored to partner with grassroots organizations in Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia and elsewhere who work tirelessly with dedication and determination to provide assistance to meet the needs in their communities – they only thing they are lacking is resources.

I wish to express my deep-felt gratitude to all of our supporters, particularly our dedicated federal and state employees who give a piece out of every hard-earned paycheck, for making everything we have accomplished possible and a sincere thank you on behalf of thousands whose lives you have touched. It fills my heart with pride and joy that over the past nearly three decades you have made my vision a reality, but as you must know we will never be finished when there is still one hungry or cold child in need of a meal and winter coat, or one single struggling family with a house in desperate need of repair. Although I just recently retired as board president, I remain active for this worthy cause and know that you will, as it says in the Bible, continue to “fight the good fight.” ★

God Bless You,

Eugene L. Krizek, USAF Col. (Retired)
Founder and President Emeritus
Americans Helping Americans®





What We Do

The Challenge

Appalachia is one of our country's most beautiful regions, containing tightly-knit communities where families have lived for generations and that they are proud to call it home.

Unfortunately, Appalachia remains a region plagued with longstanding poverty, high unemployment and lack of opportunity, dilapidated housing, and thousands of families living below the poverty level struggling to survive.



Mr. Krizek's first visit to West Virginia in the early 1980s

That means that elderly and disabled homeowners, many of them our country's veterans, living on meager fixed incomes have no means to repair leaking roofs; repair rotting floors, porches and steps; or to construct a handicap ramp.



A grateful family for the home rehab project in Bradley County, Tennessee, 2017

Low-income children are among the hardest hit. During the school year, they are guaranteed a free breakfast and lunch on weekdays, but on weekends and during the summer months, it is no "vacation" for them as they wonder when they will get their next meal. Isolation and boredom is the daily routine for tens of thousands of children living in rural Appalachia, miles from their nearest neighbor and small town.

Many children have parents who were unable to complete their education, and so they are especially in need of after-school tutoring, access to the internet, and study and enrichment programs, where they receive encouragement and learn the importance of getting a good education.★



The Hope and the Future

Since 1990, Americans Helping Americans® has worked in Appalachia in a cooperative, locally-focused way with community partner organizations who understand the needs and how best to meet them.

Our shared goal is to promote self-sufficiency and self-esteem for those living in poverty-stricken areas of Appalachia – one in which families are able to meet their basic survival needs, where children succeed in school, and more citizens have the opportunity and support necessary to break the generational cycle of poverty.

Americans Helping Americans® and its loyal supporters are proud to team up with those local organizations to provide the financial resources to operate their programs, as well as in-kind items such as winter coats, school supplies, nonperishable food boxes, and more to fill in the gaps.★



The Lunch Box Bus ready to serve children living in a remote area of Hawkins County, Tennessee, 2017



A student from Rogersville Elementary School, Rogersville, Tennessee, 2016

AHA has gone beyond our wildest dreams in the way they have helped our community. It is so hard to see the community that I have lived in my entire life losing all our businesses and resources. It seems the heart has been taken from our homes and left a hole filled by drugs, alcohol and poverty. Those of us in education, religion and community programs work daily to restore the "heart" to our community, and we are making strides, especially with our children.

– Sherry Lanham, Director for the Lee County Family Resource Center in Beattyville, KY





Americans Helping Americans® Program Goals



Home Rehabilitation

Provides families with safe and stable housing, including repairing roofs, floors, rotting porches and stairs, as well as constructing handicap ramps for the elderly and disabled so they may remain in their homes.



Education

Offers children academic assistance, such as one-on-one after-school tutoring and enrichment programs when school is in session, as well as a backpack full of school supplies at the start of the school year, giving children the support they need to be successful in school.



Summer Camps

Provides nutritional meals, educational and fun activities, and safe havens for children during the school break. Children attend free summer camps held by our partners and supported by us.



Summer Food

Provides boxes of non-perishable food items, containing enough food to feed a family of four for a week to families in Gainesville and Cleveland, Georgia. Our Lunch Box Bus program converts old school buses into mobile cafeterias, delivering a nutritious meal each summer weekday in the remote areas of Hawkins County, TN to hundreds of children who would otherwise go hungry.



Veterans

Meets veterans' essential needs for food, clothing and housing to honor their sacrifice and commitment to our country, in cooperation with various organizations in Appalachia.



BareFeet

Funds the Barefeet program with local community partners to provide new shoes for children. The children are taken to a neighborhood shoe store and spend time choosing their favorite pair of new shoes, which express their own unique personality.



Vocational Training

Supports vocational training programs for young adults who may need remedial help in earning a GED, and other training opportunities for them to earn a skilled trade license and enter the workforce.



Summer enrichment program in War, West Virginia, 2017



Learning crafts at a summer enrichment program in Beattyville, Kentucky, 2017



Basic Relief

Provides hygiene kits, emergency utility payment assistance, rent assistance, winter coats, new shoes, blankets, diapers, and more in times of crisis and severe need.



Wellness

Provides funding for eye exams and eyeglasses for elderly and low-income individuals and provides dental hygiene kits to children.



Digital Divide

Provides desktop computers for students to enable them to access the Internet for homework, research and other school assignments, and enhance other educational opportunities.





Home Rehabilitation



For thousands of elderly and disabled homeowners living on small fixed incomes, their home is the only thing of value they own.

They live month-to-month paying their bills and putting food on the table, budgeting down to the last penny. And when their home needs repair to make it warm, safe and secure or with handicap access, there are no savings in the bank for that.

But thanks to our partners in Tennessee, West Virginia, Georgia and Kentucky, they have somewhere to turn. Our partners organize home rehabilitation projects utilizing hundreds of volunteers from churches and schools from spring to fall. This could not have been realized without our supporters of Americans Helping Americans® who fund the materials such as lumber, shingles, and other building supplies to provide the repairs at no cost to grateful homeowners.

Home Rehabilitation Highlights

- ★ 40 home rehabilitation projects were completed, benefiting 154 individuals in West Virginia.
- ★ 5 home rehabilitation projects were completed in Georgia.
- ★ 23 home rehabilitation projects were completed in Tennessee, including two homes which needed major work including insulation, interior walls, ceiling replacement, water and septic lines, a bathroom shower, and kitchen cabinets, all of which were fully rehabilitated.
- ★ 12 home rehabilitation projects were completed in Kentucky. ★

Handicap Ramp Provides Mobility and Independence

For William, living alone with failing health and in desperate need of a motorized chair to get around, the only way he could get from his car to his trailer home was to crawl to the concrete blocks in front of his door and pull himself up using a very unsteady handrail.

But that was before a volunteer with Americans Helping Americans® partner in Laurel County, Kentucky, Come-Unity Cooperative Care (CCC), saw William struggle while delivering a food box to him.

I want to thank you all so much for working on my home. Water was coming down off the mountain and rotting the back of my house. I appreciate you all digging a drainage ditch and making repairs to my home.

– Buster Roberts, War, WV

The volunteer went to CCC executive director Linda Gilreath informing her of the situation and telling her, “We have to do something.”

Gilreath went to William’s home to speak with him about the prospect of building a handicap ramp and porch on the front of his mobile home.

“It was obvious that he was very sad, and very lonely,” Linda told us. “His health was extremely declined, and he appeared frail and weak. He

See “Ramp,” page 7



“Ramp,” from page 7

told us that he ate very little. He passed time by watching westerns on television.”

“He said every day was a struggle to get through,” she reported.

Shortly thereafter, Linda told William the good news that she had received some grant money from Americans Helping Americans® to build a ramp and porch, if he thought it would help him.

Needless to say, William was overjoyed.

Linda then got busy. With the money from Americans Helping Americans® already in hand, her first task was to round up volunteers to provide the free labor.

Within minutes of returning to her office, she called a fellow Rotarian who just happened to be the pastor of a church located less than a half-mile from William’s house to inquire whether his church would be able to provide volunteer laborers. She then contacted a contractor from another church who volunteered to put together a materials list and oversee the construction.

The next Saturday, Linda described “a deluge [of] volunteers” armed with hammers and saws arrived.

In addition, a group of “church ladies” prepared a huge meal of home-cooked food for all the volunteers, and of course, William.

After the project was complete, the CCC volunteer continued to bring William his box of food each month, and every single time he would profusely thank her again for the ramp.

“He told us how it changed his life,” said Linda. “He said he could go anywhere he wanted now.”

William started attending the church that had done



Above: William’s home before the rehab in Laurel, Kentucky, 2017. Below: William’s home after the ramp was built in Laurel, Kentucky, 2017

the construction. He went to visit family members and friends he hadn’t seen in years. He bought himself a small patio table and chairs and said his favorite thing to do was eat his meals on the porch.

Over the months that followed, William eventually passed away, and thanks to the supporters of Americans Helping Americans® who provided the funds, material, and labor to construct the ramp and porch, his final days on Earth were filled with joy and happiness.

“He was no longer trapped inside his trailer living a lonely, destitute life,” said Linda. “The simple act of paying for and building that ramp allowed him to rejoin society and substantially increased his quality of life.” ★





Education



At Americans Helping Americans®, we don't believe education is a key to success – we believe it is THE key to a bright future. That's why we support after school programs where children get one-on-one tutoring to help them master what they were taught in the classroom. For adults, we supported a vocational training program in West Virginia, helping young adults who dropped out of high school to earn a GED and learn a trade.

Education and Vocational Training Highlights

- ★ 5,220 elementary and middle school students received backpacks filled with school supplies throughout Appalachia and elsewhere.
- ★ 44 elementary school children participated in an after-school program in West Virginia.
- ★ 85 youth benefited from an after-school program in Georgia.
- ★ 29 youth participated in the youth delinquency prevention program in Georgia.
- ★ 11 youth benefited from an after-school program in Tennessee.
- ★ 175 vocational training participants received one-on-one tutoring support through a vocational training program sponsored by the McDowell County Career & Technology Center.
- ★ 66 individuals were supported through a work readiness program, work assistance, independent enterprise support, and vocational training in Georgia. ★



A student from Bevins Elementary School in Sidney, Kentucky, 2017

Students from Belfry Middle School, in Belfry, Kentucky, 2017

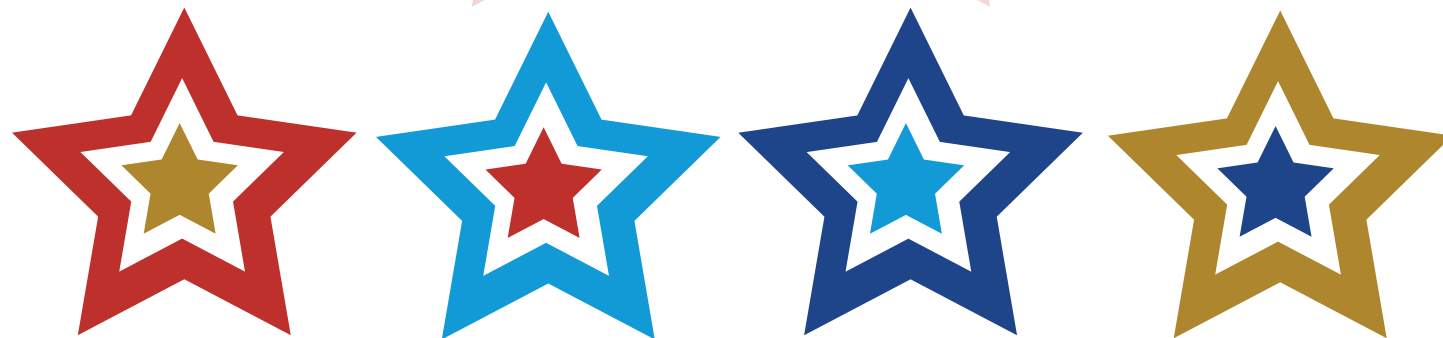


After School program in Gainesville, Georgia, 2017



“Thank you for all your donors do. You are making a difference directly and indirectly and bringing hope and help where there seems to be none. You are empowering people.”

– Ann Fleming, Caring Hands Ministries





Bridging the Digital Divide in Appalachia, And Granting Christmas Wishes



The “digital divide” is the difference between the “haves” and the “have-nots” – those children who have computers and broadband access at home, and those who do not. Computers without internet access at home is a matter of concern of educators who increasingly require or assume students have computer access to be able to do their homework. In many parts of Appalachia, there are parents who simply cannot afford it.

It's also a concern to us here at Americans Helping Americans®.

To remedy that situation in Beattyville, Kentucky, Americans Helping Americans® has launched a pilot project in partnership with Beattyville Elementary School and AT&T to help bridge the digital divide which exists in the community.

On Christmas day, two dozen students unwrapped a big box containing a brand-new HP 20 All-in-One PC. The school system is licensed to install grade appropriate educational software to compliment

24 elementary school children received desktop computers to enable them to do their homework at home, conduct research and communicate with their teachers via email in Kentucky.

what is taught in the classroom, and AT&T has agreed to provide high-speed internet for less than \$20 per month based on the family's income.

Sherry Lanham, director of the Lee County Family Resource Center located in the school, oversees the program and, consulting with teachers, selected the most deserving students with responsible parents



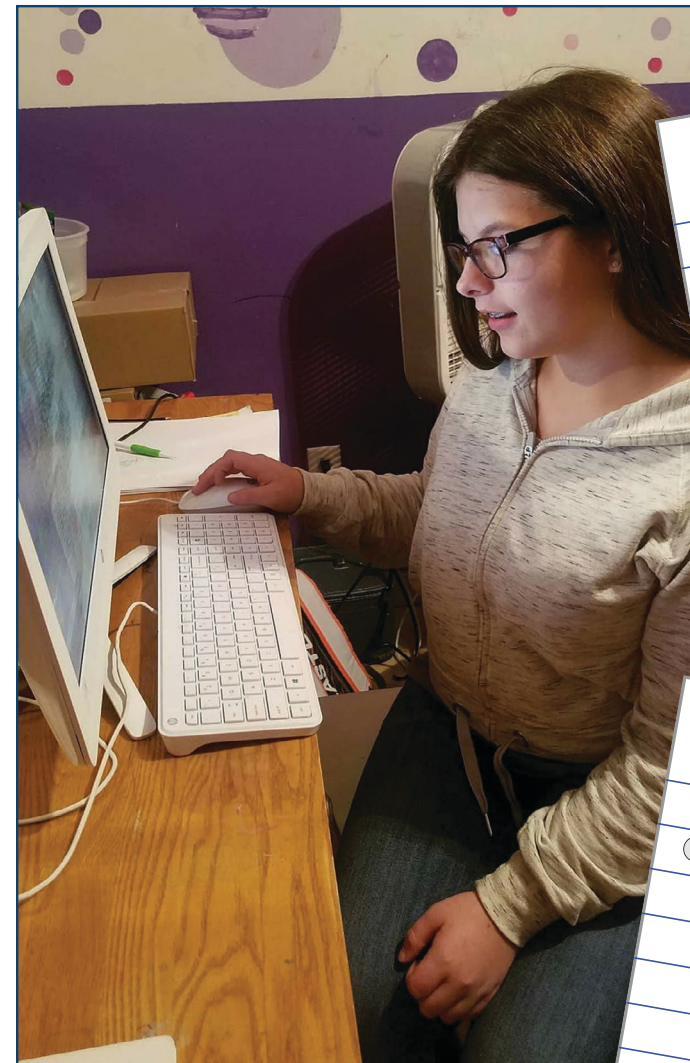
Bill working on a homework assignment in Beattyville, Kentucky, 2017

who are available to monitor their children when they are using the computer at home.

Among them was Crystal, an honor roll student whose parents both work and try to provide for her. They are supportive of her attending every school event and give back to their community through volunteer work, but are often overlooked because they never ask for anything.

“The parents and children were both in shock and disbelief that they were receiving such a gift,” reported Sherry.

Bridging the digital divide and providing enhanced educational opportunities for bright children eager to learn was only made possible through the compassion and generosity of supporters of Americans Helping Americans®. ★



Sandra researching for a homework assignment in Beattyville, Kentucky, 2017

Dear Americans Helping Americans,
I would like to thank you for the new HP computer my daughter received as a gift from the Family Resource Center. This computer has greatly made things easier for my daughter. She is now able to access the school educational sites and many links she uses at school. I can not thank you enough for her new computer. Your generosity was greatly appreciated.

Thank you!
Beattyville Elementary School student parent

12-26-17

Dear Americans Helping Americans,

Thank you so much for caring about others and allowing so many of us students to receive a computer. I have now been able to get on mine and do school work such as Symphony and Lexia. Receiving my computer was an absolute dream come true.

You have no idea how happy I was and most of all how much I appreciate it. I will always take extra care of it. It has a lot of features that are going to benefit me the rest of the school year and the year after here.

Again, you have made this year one of my best yet. I hope the other children appreciate everything you do as much as I have. One day I wish to give back to others the way you have. Thank you again so much.

Sincerely,

4th grade student at
Lee County Elementary





Summer Programs



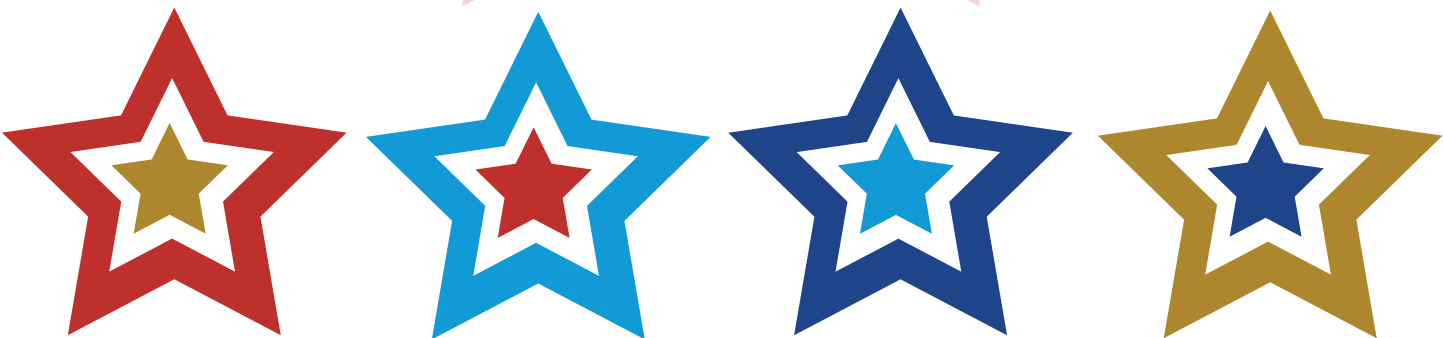
For many children in Appalachia, the summer break is no “vacation.” They miss out on the free meals they get when school is in session – which guaranteed them at least one healthy, filling meal each weekday – something they’re not assured of at home when the cupboard is bare. Many of these children live in rural regions where there are no neighborhoods, and no means of transportation to play with school friends. That’s why Americans Helping Americans® supports educational summer camps and the Lunch Box bus program, which feeds 400 children each weekday.



The Lunch Box Bus in Tennessee, 2017

Summer Programs Highlights

- ★ 72 children attended a summer enrichment camp in West Virginia.
- ★ 24 children attended a summer enrichment camp in Georgia.
- ★ 37 children attended a summer enrichment camp in Tennessee.
- ★ 98 children attended a summer enrichment camp in Kentucky.
- ★ 48 children benefited from the summer food program in Georgia.
- ★ 12,464 meals were served to low-income children through the Lunch Box bus, which delivers meals in rural Tennessee when school is out for the summer. ★



Summer Camps: “Yes, I Like It!”

Boredom and loneliness can have a profound negative impact on a young child during the long empty days of summer in West Virginia, with nothing to do and their friends miles away.

But dozens of children in McDowell County can look forward to attending a fun-filled literacy learning camp organized by Americans Helping Americans® partner Big Creek People in Action (BCPIA) every summer.

The children ages 3-7 attended the Super Why camp, from the educational PBS show, that features characters from the program with camp activities reinforcing knowledge through repetition and multiple modes of learning – art, music, movement, dance and games – and also through multimedia including CDs, DVDs, and worksheets.

Many who attend the camp for the first time, such as 4-year-old Aiden, may not even know their ABCs when they start camp, but that all changes by the end of the week.

BCPIA co-executive director Marsha Timpson reported that “We sing the ABC song every morning, and he eventually was able to sing the along with us. One day I asked him he liked the ABC song and he smiled and screamed, ‘Yes, like it!’”

Another little girl, Sierra, was also a first-time camper this year. Sadly, she comes from a family where she doesn’t receive much attention or encouragement, but she really enjoyed making crafts and she would clap her hands and exclaim “Yay!” when it was craft time.

Sierra would proudly display her completed craft project and then immediately ask “What are we doing next?” ★



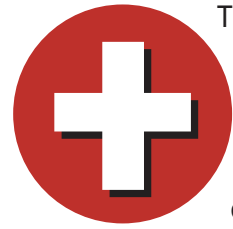
Summer reading program in War, West Virginia, 2017



Summer camp program in Beattyville, Kentucky, 2016



Basic Needs



They're called basic needs because that's exactly what they are: boxes of non-perishable food items to help feed families down on their luck and to help seniors and veterans living on meager fixed incomes get through the month. Americans Helping Americans® also provides in-kind items that most Americans would consider necessities, such as a new pair of shoes for an elementary school student or a new warm winter coat that would be simply unaffordable for many parents struggling just to put food on the table and keep their utility bills paid.

Basic Needs Highlights

- ★ 18,778 individuals received in-kind items, including hygiene items like soap, diapers, laundry detergent and hygiene kits; winter coats and accessories; blankets; shoes; dental kits; and holiday food distributions throughout Appalachia and elsewhere.
- ★ 87 veterans received food support in West Virginia.
- ★ 843 individuals benefited from the utility assistance program in Georgia.
- ★ 99 veterans were supported with a monthly food box in Georgia.
- ★ 59 individuals received eye examinations and eyeglasses.
- ★ 170 children benefited from the BareFeet program in Kentucky.
- ★ 62 families benefited from the utility assistance and utility deposit program in Kentucky, Georgia, and Tennessee. ★



Eye care program in Hancock County, Tennessee, 2017



Oral health care training for the students by the local health department at Beattyville Elementary School, in Beattyville, Kentucky, 2017



Utility Assistance Program Saves Woman and Four-Legged Best Friend from Homelessness

"Somebody does care 'bout an old woman and her dog," Ms. Stella told us after worrying about how to pay her power bill last winter.

She and her four-legged companion Joe literally could've been out on the street, as public housing will evict a tenant if their electricity or heat is shut off. Joe had gotten sick and she made the choice to take him to the vet, and even though the vet gave her a very reduced price for the dog's medicine and didn't charge her for the office visit, for Ms. Stella \$37 was the difference in being able to pay her electric bill in full.

"I know what would happen to me – they'd put me out and stick me in a home someplace," she said. "I know what would happen to Joe too, a sick old dog. They'd kill him. He would never be adopted."

"But me and Joe, we need each other," she added. "He wakes me up every morning and he is the reason that I do get up. You saved two lives when you helped me with that power bill."

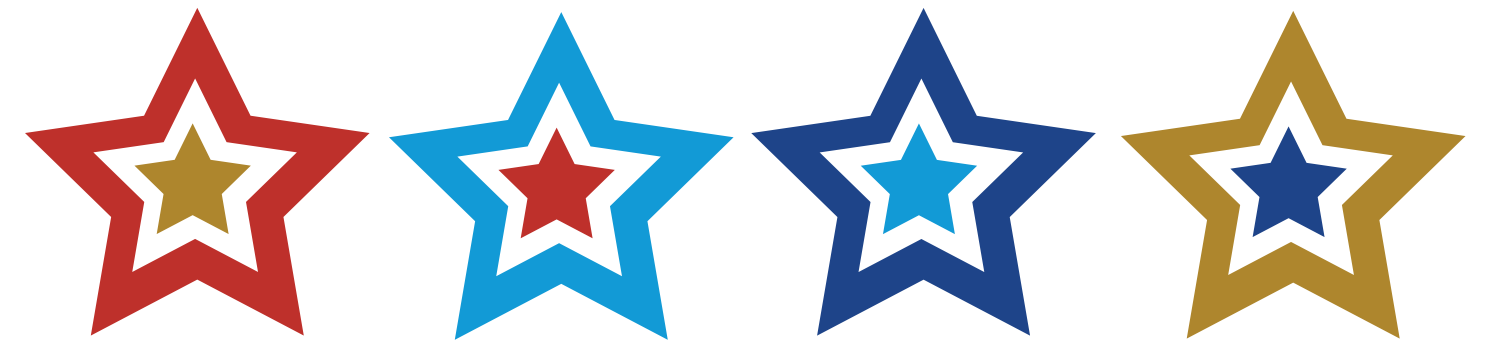
But that's not the end of the story. Our partner there, Caring Hands Ministries, was able to put her in touch with a church group that will bring Ms. Stella supper once a week and visit with her. ★

"We want you to know that we are eternally grateful to Americans Helping Americans for their support of our programs, and look forward to continuing our partnership to help the people of McDowell County, West Virginia.

– Dyanne Spriggs, Big Creek In Action Co-Founder

"I wanted to thank you for all you do for Appalachian people. It is greatly appreciated.

– Cynthia Evanoff, Executive Director, Cumberland Mountain Outreach





Ann Fleming: A Woman with Caring Hands, and a Mission

Ann Fleming is a woman with a mission – a mission she’s had since 1995 when she founded Caring Hands Ministries with her husband Charles Fleming and the late Mervin Caudell, to help people in northeast Georgia with emergency assistance including food, utility assistances, homeless prevention, job readiness, self-sufficiency and community programs, such as their annual community Christmas dinner for over 600 people.

Ann leads an all-volunteer ministry serving more than 4,000 people each year, and Americans Helping Americans® is proud to be one of their long-term partners assisting with cash grants for assistance in paying utility bills, as well in-kind items such as winter coats, blankets, shoes, and more.

“Americans Helping Americans® played a major part in more than 75 percent of this [support],” Ann reported. “This improved their lives and gave people hope.”

Ann credits Americans Helping Americans® as being a major part of everything we do. Local fundraising is very important, but is seasonal and subject to many variables. “Americans Helping Americans® is steady and dependable and allows us to work with a sane basic budget.”

“Equally important, Americans Helping Americans® is not ‘distant’ but gives the impression of caring [about] what is happening locally,” she added. “Americans Helping Americans® feels like a real partner in our work.”

But as a leader of a charity herself, Ann knows it is not Americans Helping Americans®, but our supporters who give generously, which allows us to provide much needed assistance year in and year out to Ann’s cause.

And this is what she wants our supporters to know: “You are not only meeting needs, you are changing lives, and, more often than you might think, you are saving lives.”



Mrs. Ann Fleming with a young girl in Cleveland, Georgia, 2017

Among those whose lives have been changed is Bob, a disabled veteran who lives partly in his truck, whose trust was hard to gain.

What finally got through to him was when his stepfather died, his mother found out that he had racked up massive debt and she was not only about to have her utilities cut off, but she was in danger of losing her home and becoming homeless at age 71.

“Bob saw that Americans Helping Americans® helped make it possible for his mother to get help with her utilities and advice that helped save her home,” Ann said. “That got through to him and he started listening.”

Ann told him about a Veterans Administration program that would help him get a job “and he started to hold his head up and feel worthwhile again.” He starts school this month and now has a permanent home.

“All this because you made it possible for us to help with a utility bill for his mother,” she commented. ★

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We couldn’t do it without you!

Thank you to all those who continue to support Americans Helping Americans® and our partners! We especially thank all Federal and Military personnel who have contributed to our organization through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) and state, local, United Way, and corporate campaigns across the country. ★

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