

AGAPE of NC

December 2020



OUR MISSION

AGAPE of NC exists to provide professional social services as a compassionate Christian outreach to strengthen children and families.

OUR VALUES

Children deserve Christian families, care and compassion, excellence in the provision of services, best interest of clients, financial integrity, responsible stewardship and ethical Christian standards.

OUR AGAPE DECEMBER UPDATE

31 Foster Children & Youth In Care

29 Licensed Foster Homes



6 Foster Families in Training

1 Adoption Finalized in 2020

2 Pending Adoptions

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A Bloom Family Design Make-Over!

By Angela Canada (a Foster Parent with AGAPE of NC)



In August 2019, I received a call, informing me about a new non-profit organization, Bloom Family Designs, that was starting up in North Carolina. During the call, I was also notified that I had been nominated to have a room in my house redesigned!

I met with the Founding Director of Bloom Family Designs of Central NC, Staci Stepp (also a Foster Parent with AGAPE of NC), and her Assistant to go over ideas and what I wanted from the room. I love color and was so pleased when they proposed a design that continued the color scheme I already enjoyed in my house! The rug and blanket they used wonderfully tied it all together!

For my project, Staci reached out to several local community members and conducted several fundraisers. Bloom Family Designs was able to raise enough money to turn a basic room, that previously contained only a bed and dresser, into a

beautiful nursery for a young child! The Bloom Family team redid every aspect of the room including paint, blinds, fixtures -- even adding missing shelves in the closet. They also provided all the lovely furniture and accessories shown in the pictures, including the basket of "goodies" on the changing table.

Completed in December 2019, my room was now better prepared to accommodate a small child. That allowed me more opportunities to accept foster placements for younger children, starting as young as 6 weeks old.

So, this year I have been blessed with a 2 1/2 year-old "little firecracker!" He has been able to maintain sleeping in the crib, which works well since he moves around a lot during the night. He loves the rocker and really enjoys book time in it!

And about that basket of "goodies?" Staci obtained it from a resource that has continued to be a blessing to me during these last few months of 2020. I am so very grateful for the gifts received through Bloom Family Design of Central NC that just keep on giving!

[Editor's Note: Staci Stepp commented that Bloom Family Designs of Central NC's very first project "was the room gifted to Angela. A beautiful nursery done in the theme of the Giving Tree book." Bloom Family Designs-Central NC had to pause normal operations during 2020 due to Covid precautions, but they resumed taking projects again in October. Staci informed, "We are currently fundraising to gift our third room this coming January. The room will be for a child who was adopted from the foster care system. She and her family are waiting for placement of another foster daughter, and the two will share a room together." For more information about the Bloom Family Design organization, to donate, or to nominate a family to receive a room make-over, visit their website at www.bloomfamilydesigns.com. You can also find them on Facebook and Instagram @bloomfamilydesigns_nc / donate via Venmo @bfd-centralNC /or contact Staci Stepp at 910-528-0263 and staci@bloomfamilydesigns.com.]



CHANGE FOR LIFE
agapeofnc.org

It's not too late to support Change for Life, our annual giving campaign, running through December, when we urge you to pray over your ability to give an annual donation to AGAPE of NC. During this time, churches across North Carolina will come together and collect your special offerings. You may also donate online, via text, or by mailing a check. You can set up monthly giving online, via bank draft, or bill pay too. **All your gifts will support the mission of AGAPE of NC.**



CHANGE FOR LIFE FACE MASK GIFTS

In November, a Face Mask with AGAPE's CHANGE FOR LIFE logo was sent to every AGAPE supporter for whom we had a mailing address – over 740 small packages!

A small gift of our appreciation, we hope you will wear the free face mask proudly as a supporter for AGAPE of NC!

Our remaining supply of C4L face masks is limited, but *while they last . . .*

~ We plan to send a C4L face mask to each New Donor.

~ We will re-send a C4L face mask if you let us know you did not receive one and provide your current mailing address via our Contact Us webpage – just indicate "Address Update" in the message.

PLEASE send us a SELFIE wearing your CHANGE FOR LIFE FACE MASK!
(Photos may be sent to korander@agapeofnc.org)

AGAPE of North Carolina expresses our gratitude to the Donor who made this gift possible!

We always appreciate each of YOU who supports our mission! Text GIVE to 919-335-4685



CHANGE FOR LIFE
agapeofnc.org

Carolina Bible Camp Hosting 2021 Bluegrass Festival

By Lisa D. Brewer, Executive Director of CBC's Bluegrass Festival

Everyone's favorite group, Scythian, is returning to Carolina Bible Camp! Although the COVID-19 global pandemic caused the cancellation of the 2020 Carolina Bible Camp Bluegrass Festival, organizers and guests alike are looking forward prayerfully to next year's event!

The 9th annual fundraising festival will take place on Saturday, September 11, 2021 at Carolina Bible Camp in Mocksville, NC. A special and patriotic time of remembrance is planned to recognize the 20th anniversary of the September 11 attacks on America.

Popular group Scythian was founded by brothers Alexander and Danylo Fedoryka, first-generation sons of Ukrainian immigrants. Their band has been a search and love for the "old time, good time music" of many cultures, including classical, gypsy, bluegrass, and more.

The band includes Alexander on fiddle, mandolin, bass, and vocals; Danylo on rhythm guitar, accordion, and vocals; Ethan Dean on electric and upright bass and vocals and Johnny Rees on drums. The band has played more than 1,300 shows all over the world, including a memorable 2008 St.

Patrick's Day performance at the White House for President George W. Bush. The band is a perennial favorite at MerleFest, where they play special sets for children and families as well as on the mainstage.



Additional announcements about the bluegrass festival line-up will follow throughout the year. Tickets will be available online in late summer. Carolina Bible Camp is grateful to AGAPE of NC for once again sponsoring the Kids' Activity Tent and babies' Nappin' Cabin during the festival.

We continue to pray that COVID conditions will allow us all to gather at the Camp in September, and sooner!

BACKPACK BLESSINGS 2020!

Hornets' Nest Council Girl Scout Troop 1607 & Other Donors

AGAPE of NC Board Member, Joe Hall, talked about AGAPE's activities and needs during a 2019 visit to Lake Norman Church of Christ in Huntersville. Brooklyn & Paityn, daughters of Minister Travis & Carley Robertson, were there for Joe's presentation, and they remembered AGAPE's mission this past Spring when their scout troop was selecting a service project.

Carley, who is a Co-Leader for Hornets' Nest Council Girl Scout Troop 1607 in Concord, reached out in May 2020 to tell us the Troop had decided on a project for AGAPE to earn their Bronze Awards. [Editor's Note: Carley explained that a Bronze Award is earned by "helping make the world a better place" through a Take Action Project (TAP), describing it as a "huge milestone for these girls as it's the first of three big awards they can receive as a Girl Scout."]

Emphasizing that Girl Scouts is a girl-led program, Carley informed us that providing "welcome bags" for AGAPE to give to kids in foster care was all the girls' idea. Adults would be present to help guide and encourage them as they completed the project, but they would be doing all the "leg work." To teach them valuable lessons in communicating with adults and project planning, AGAPE connected with Carley and the Troop by phone and email to provide feedback on the types of items needed and the age groups to be served.

Over the Summer, the 9 girls in Troop 1607 set about making comfort blankets, raising funds, and collecting backpacks and "goodies" (like journals, soaps, deodorants, hair care products, and other toiletries) to go in them! To reach their donation goals, the girls made a video asking for gifts and held a bake sale. They shopped to purchase items not contributed. Then, they enjoyed working together again (outside and following other social distancing precautions) to sort everything and fill backpacks.

By the end of September, GS Troop 1607 had 40 fully loaded backpacks --some for small children but mainly for the Tween/Teen age group-- to deliver to AGAPE of NC! The girls also provided some extra supplies for our inventory and an additional \$150 in cash for AGAPE to buy more backpacks when needed!

AGAPE of NC Social Worker, Esther Schmidt, met the Troop at Mallard Creek Community Park in Charlotte to receive all their Backpack donations and congratulate the girls on such an achievement. When requested, Esther (a Girl Scout, herself, back in the day) was thrilled to participate in the girls' Bronze Award presentation ceremony too!

Here are some responses from the girls of Troop 1607, describing their experience:

Why did you decide to help AGAPE of NC?

- "To help foster kids."
- "Because some children don't have the same privileges we do."
- "Because they [AGAPE of NC] help kids in foster care. Also, they help all of the kids find homes."

What has been your favorite part of this project?

- "I enjoyed making blankets."
- "Collecting the stuff and making blankets."
- "Going shopping and hanging with my troop."



When asked how the AGAPE Backpack project impacted them, the Girl Scouts reported that it made them feel "good" and "proud;" that it was "really fun;" and that they "loved it" and "would do this all the time!" Troop Leader, Carley Robertson, reiterated "The girls were so excited. They feel so proud of their accomplishment and their work to help the community. We would love to continue working with AGAPE of NC and keeping in touch as needs arise!"



Backpack Blessings 2020! continued . . .

Acknowledging Other 2020 Donors to AGAPE of NC's Backpack Ministry

~ In May 2020, Tamara Phelps-Giscombe (from Wake Forest) was also looking for a charitable way for her family to contribute to our community. She contacted us to find out more about AGAPE's Backpack Ministry. Then, watching for sales over the summer months, Tamara generously purchased backpacks, and commenced collecting recommended contents (fleece blankets, as well as hygiene, skin, and hair care products), to give to Tween/Teen-aged kids entering foster care. Tamara contacted AGAPE again in September and delivered 10 more fully packed "first night comfort" bags that she and her kids had lovingly put together!

~ There are some ladies at Raleigh Church of Christ (we may not know all their names, but we know HE does) who like to make teddy bears. Most of the bears are donated to first responders and area hospitals to be given to children they encounter during emergency situations or who are in pediatric wards. Periodically, the bear ladies send some of their creations AGAPE's way too. This past September, AGAPE's Volunteer Backpack Coordinator, Tatum Fitzgerald, was pleased to deliver a good assortment of those lovely hand-sewn bears for future use in AGAPE Backpack Ministry!

~ Crocheting infant caps and small children's afghans was one of the "stay-at-home" projects Grace Meade and Lisa Brewer (from Wilkesboro Church of Christ) undertook this year. In September, Lisa delivered a bunch of those caps and afghans to AGAPE. We kept what we needed for our Infant/Children's backpacks – and blessed a charitable Foster Care Closet in the Burlington area with the remainder of those big-hearted donations! Then, having learned more about AGAPE's concerted efforts to aid the underserved population of older kids in foster care, Grace and Lisa went back to work. In November, Lisa also brought us some crocheted washcloths and loofahs, paired with shampoos, lotions, or bath foam/bubbles!

~ The day before Thanksgiving, AGAPE of NC even received a nice monetary donation from a service provider. Those funds will allow AGAPE to purchase gift cards (which are sometimes needed in lieu of products) for our Backpack Ministry.

~ Finally, we want to recognize all the AmazonSmile shoppers who have been buying products from AGAPE's Charity Shopping & Wish Lists and having Amazon ship their purchases directly to us!

The Current State and Future of AGAPE's Backpack Ministry

AGAPE of NC is very grateful to everyone who has donated to our Backpack Ministry in 2020!! Thanks to your generosity, we currently have an abundant backpack inventory! Normally, AGAPE would be providing back-packs to foster children coming into care on a regular basis -- but unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions, our distribution of foster care bags has been suspended until it is deemed safe for AGAPE's Volunteer Backpack Ambassadors to resume deliveries.

Be assured . . . when that time comes (and we hope it will be soon), we will again need your help! Until then, if you want to contribute to AGAPE of NC's Backpack Ministry, please contact our Project Coordinator, Kaye Orander (korander@agapeofnc.org), to inquire about items needed most and to confirm we have space available to accept additional donations. We remain grateful for your generous hearts and Backpack Blessings!!



AGAPE of N.C.



TRIBUTE GIFTS October 2020 through December 2020

In Memory of Ms. Ann Peterman Given By
Ms. Gina Peterman

In Memory of Mr. Shep & Mrs. Gillie Salter
Given By Ms. Lelia Gore

In Memory of Mr. Tom Smith
Given By Mr. & Mrs. Ted Fowler

In Memory of Ms. Mary Ruth Forrest Essic
Given By Mr. Jeff Essic

In Memory of Mr. Claude Duffield
Given By Ms. Clarice Holland

In Memory of Mr. Alton Holland
Given By Ms. Clarice Holland

In Memory of Mr. Eric Thanos
Given By Mr. Allan & Mrs. Barbara Johnson

In Memory of Mr. Pete Srnick
Given By Dr. Robert & Mrs. Kaye Orander

In Honor of Mr. David & Mrs. Ann McDonnell
Given By Mr. Jesse & Mrs. Kayla McDonnell

In Honor of Drs. Bobby & Bonnie Grigsby
Given By Mr. Greg & Mrs. Lisa Brewer

In Honor of Mr. & Mrs. Coleman Dove
and Mr. & Mrs. Jack Lipsey
Given By Drs. Bobby & Bonnie Grigsby

In Honor of Mr. Jack Harris
(Happy Birthday Wishes!)
Given Anonymously

In Honor of Mr. Steve Sell
(Merry Christmas Wishes!)
Given By Mr. JW & Mrs. Ann Dunn



WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

Ways to Donate:

online at:

www.agapeofnc.org/donate

by text to: 919-335-4685
(type GIVE)

Send checks to:
POBox 985,
Wake Forest, NC 27588

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