



AGAPE
— of north carolina —



40th

ANNIVERSARY | 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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by Nicole Spickard

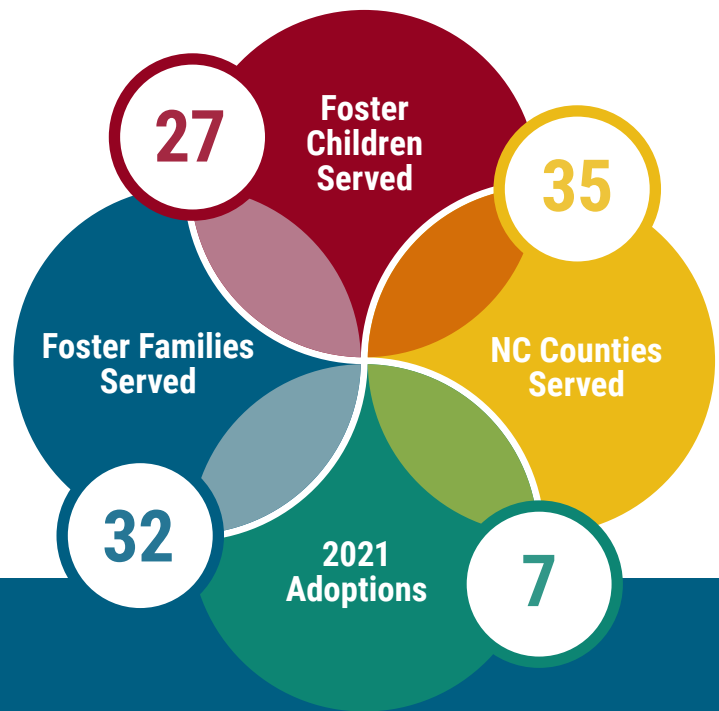
Historical Revenue

Faces of Agape

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

YEAR-END UPDATE

as of December 31, 2021



THANK YOU, SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS, FOR ANOTHER AMAZING YEAR OF **GIVING YOUR HEARTS AND SOULS TO THE MINISTRY** OF LOVING CHILDREN AND STRENGTHENING FAMILIES.

Each year comes with its own unique set of strengths and challenges, and 2021 has been no different. We have continued to weather COVID-19 and all of its variations. We welcomed our children back into schools and continued to explore and expand on the concepts of working virtually. With all that being said, one thing remains; the same children/families are struggling. The fight for safety, love, and compassion for North Carolina's children continues to elude us, which is why we need Good People to see a problem and Take Action. Rita Pierson said it best- "Every child deserves a champion - an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be".

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF AGAPE OF NORTH CAROLINA



I HOPE YOU KNOW BY NOW THAT AGAPE IS CELEBRATING OUR 40TH ANNIVERSARY.

Agape has changed a lot over the years. The office moved from Greensboro to Raleigh. The Executive Director has changed. State laws have changed over the years. The Board of Directors have changed, and our staff and foster families have changed. We also no longer mail the bulk of our Newsletters anymore but send them digitally. Which allows us to send multiple newsletters throughout the year instead of just one. I have lots of memories of sitting in our den watching movies while folding, stapling, labeling and sorting the newsletter year after year. But the basic purpose and principal of Agape has NOT changed.

Our goal is to strengthen and grow families through foster care and adoption one child at a time. The biggest part of that is also growing families through the love of God and growing in their relationship with the Lord.

Agape strives to be compassionate, loving, and Christ centered as we work with families and all children in the home be they biological, adopted, or foster children

There are just some things that will never change. So as part of that we will continue to fundraise, **YES**

that means ask for money. We will continue to raise awareness of the need for MORE foster families in the state and we will continue to solicit prayers and support from each one of you.

It is because of YOU that we are still here. When we ask for anything, you provide. Last year with our WORTH IT! Campaign our goal was to raise \$120,000 which allows us to train 100 foster families. You not only met that goal, but exceeded by over 30%!!! As a supporter of Agape you have certain expectations. Such as knowledge and understanding of the goals and expectations of the agency, where our money comes from and especially, how we spend your money.

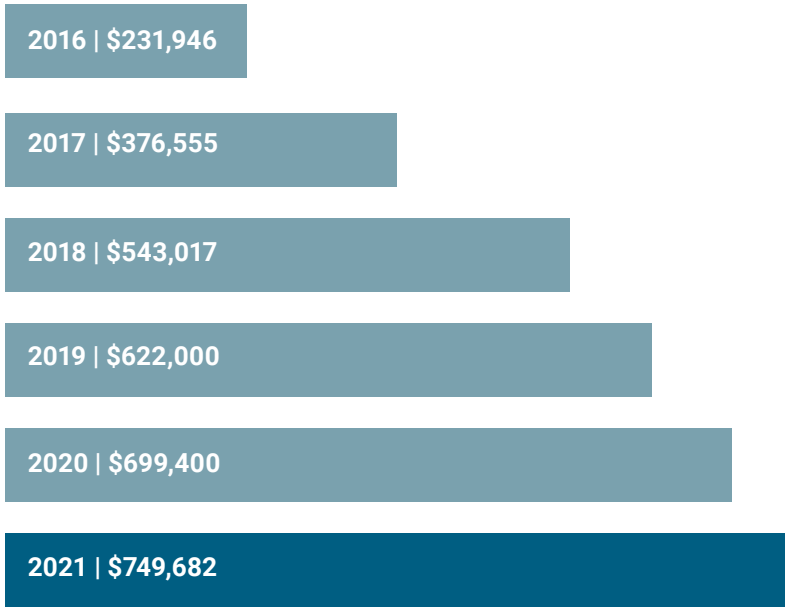
Ultimately, it boils down to your genuine heart to support Agape of NC in its commitment to improving the lives of North Carolinas' children. This year of celebration and reminiscing has been filled with stories from staff members, foster families, and adoptive families. They have all talked about their experiences with Agape from one perspective or another. The one thing they all have in common is how we as an organization truly love and care about them and their kids. I hope that comes across in everything we do.

MARK 12:30 (NIV) IS PERHAPS MY ALL-TIME FAVORITE VERSE: **YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.**

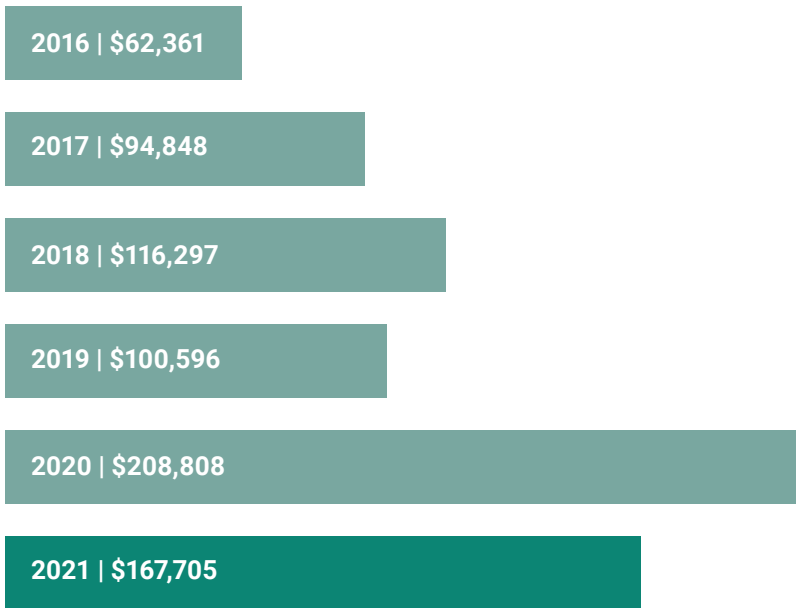
HISTORICAL REVENUE



DONATIONS & REVENUE



WORTH IT!



While the Association for Guidance, Aid, Placement and Empathy of NC, Inc. had existed for a few years on paper, it took a special person to come along and bring it to life. That person was Tom Slaughter, AGAPE of NC's first Executive Director – and so much more.

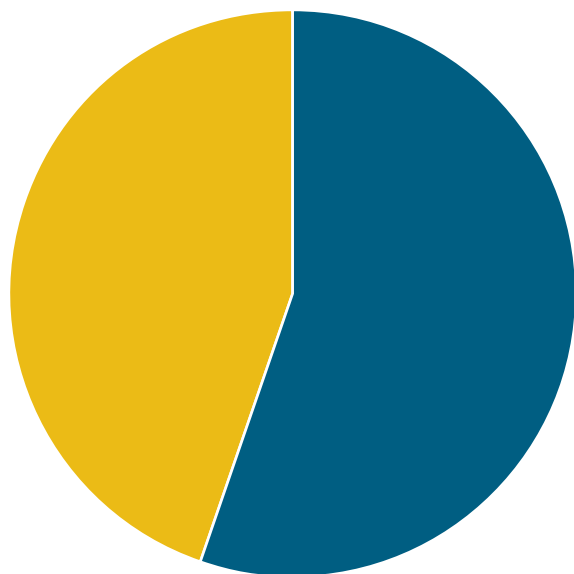
Though there have been many changes to AGAPE of NC over the years, one thing has remained the same – a mission to help children and families in need. That groundwork was laid early by a caring man who put all his love and passion into this goal.



WHERE

DID WE GET OUR MONEY?

\$334,299
DONATIONS

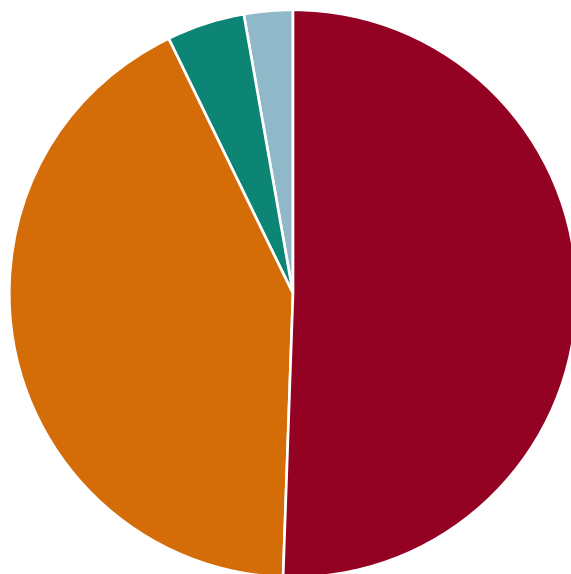


\$415,383
SERVICE REVENUE

HOW

DID WE SPEND OUR MONEY?

\$27,291 GENERAL
\$16,109 FUNDRAISING



\$256,773 STAFFING
\$310,202 PROGRAMS & SERVICES

FACES OF AGAPE • THE HANKINS FAMILY



“Fostering has helped us see the bigger picture of God’s kingdom. It is easy to get busy with our own life, thoughts, and worries. Fostering has provided us with the daily reminder to try to look outward and not so much inward. God cares about us AND he cares about vulnerable children and families. We never want to lose sight of the things that God cares about.”

FACES OF AGAPE



AGAPE OF NC'S FIRST LICENSED FOSTER FAMILY

A retelling of our full 40-year story begins with Michael and Karen Seamon, AGAPE's first licensed foster family. At the time, AGAPE's Board of Directors (which included Lem Sample and P.D. Kirby), together with AGAPE's Executive Director, Tom Slaughter, desperately needed families to join them in AGAPE's mission. The Board and Tom had been praying for people to step up, and Michael and Karen became the first answers to those prayers.

At the time, Karen was a stay-at-home mother to daughters, Katherine and Mary Jean. Karen believed AGAPE provided a way her family could serve the Lord by helping kids who needed better options. The Seamons felt capable in the ministry of providing foster care; so, they began taking children into their home – sometimes for a day, a month, a year, or a few years. When they started, the Seamons did not know they would be fostering for the next 20+ years.

Early in our interview, Michael and Karen talked about how much encouragement and assistance they received from their relatives and church family. They said, "Without that, fostering would not have been possible." Friends and family stepped in to pray for, emotionally support, and even take care of their kids for the weekend. Through tears, Michael said, "There was no difference between our foster kids and our biological kids."

The Seamons dressed all the kids in the same kind of clothes, and everyone traveled together on vacations. "We were all family." If a child in Michael and Karen's care had a school function or extracurricular activity, everybody attended in support. Even friends and other family members turned out! Karen stated,

"Foster parents should treat children in care the same as your own. There should not be a difference. That's the only way to make it work."

Like any true Mom and Dad, when kids left their home, Karen and Michael always worried. "Are they being taken care of? Are they sad? Do they miss us?" But then, life would move on, and another child or two would arrive for them to nurture and love. The Seamon Family still has a connection with some of the kids they fostered. One instance involves a little girl who was adopted and grew up to become an artist. The Seamons have some of her artwork in their home and, as adults, Katherine and Mary Jean stay in touch with her through Facebook.

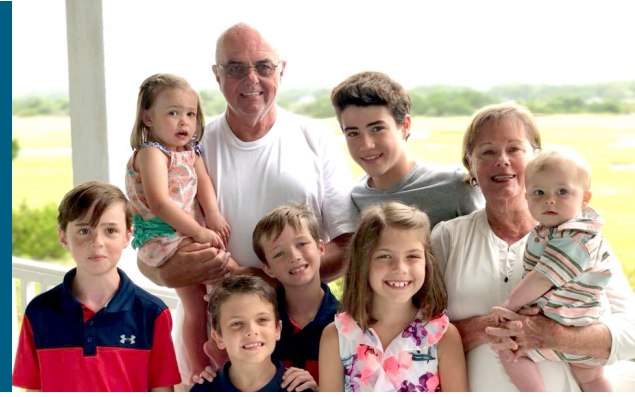
Michael teared up talking about all the children they cared for through the years. He and Karen hope all those kids know they have a Mom and Dad who still loves and thinks of them. They hope their children saw a glimpse of God through them. Michael and Karen commented that, as they fostered over time, stressful situations changed and they grew and matured as a couple, a family, and in the Lord.

One of the Seamons' first placements was a pair of siblings, ages 2 and 4. Their bio daughters were only 3 and 5 years old then too. So, that meant Karen and Michael were raising four very young children at the same time! Those foster kids eventually went back to their biological family, who lived in the same county as the Seamons. A few years later, Michael was subbing at the 4-year-old girl's school, and she recognized him. She pointed to Michael and shouted, "That's my dad!" Michael joked that the little girl's declaration started "the rumor mill" – but it clearly demonstrates the positive impact he and Karen had on that little girl's life in the short time they were together.

Another placement they had was a baby boy, just a few months old. He needed cataract surgery and could hardly see. Karen had to put contact lenses in his eyes, which is very hard to do with a squirming baby!

Over the years, the Seamons took in other children with special/medical needs. Karen and Michael never shied

ONCE YOU ARE PART OF THE AGAPE FAMILY, THERE REALLY IS NOT GETTING OUT OF IT.



away from those challenging placements, and both parents undertook any special training required. They opened their home to nurses who sometimes had to be with a child all night, making room for necessary medical equipment, and willingly paying extra-large electric bills for monitoring machines. They even learned how to change the “nose” for a child with a “trach.” Yes, it was stressful, but the Seamons also say it was “a wonderful thing to be able to share love and to care for a child who needed it.”

The Seamons were members of the same congregation (Friendly Ave. Church of Christ) as Tom and Joan Slaughter.

Because of their own fostering experience and having gone through the same medical training, Tom and Joan were able to help Michael and Karen with their special needs kids.

For example, if a child could not join the Seamon family on vacation, the Slaughters would take care of that child while the Seamons were away. Unintentionally, this incredible arrangement sparked the idea for other AGAPE Foster Families to team up and help each other.

AGAPE of NC still uses this concept of “sharing the journey” when possible among our circle of Foster Parents and Respite Volunteers because it worked so well for the Seamon and Slaughter families, as well as others through the years.

Even though Karen and Michael admitted that providing foster care is sometimes stressful, and at other times heartbreaking, they summed up their experience by saying it was “FUN!” They have fond memories of AGAPE. To this day, no other Foster Parents with AGAPE of NC have taken in as many children as the Seamons (35+ placements)!

Eventually, though, Michael and Karen did step down from fostering, a decision Karen describes as “one of the hardest things she has ever done.” At that time, however, the Seamons wanted to focus on providing the extra help needed by Ty and Hannah, two school-age children they adopted!

A few years ago, Karen and Michael moved to Nashville, TN to be with their daughters and grandchildren. When the Seamons began their AGAPE journey in North Carolina all those years ago, they attended the same church as Tom and Joan Slaughter. Now they attend the same church as the Director of AGAPE Nashville in Middle Tennessee. It just goes to show that once you are part of AGAPE, you are always family!

FACES OF AGAPE • RHONDA GOULD



AGAPE of NC opened my heart to so many babies and families. God’s servants at AGAPE also opened their hearts up to me, personally, by playing a part in my husband being able to adopt my boys a couple of years into our marriage. They did a home study for us and provided a service like none other. They helped our family during a time of child rearing hardships and celebrated with us when life moved me in a different direction.



THANK YOU

FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Agape of NC
PO Box 985, Wake Forest NC 27588
919.673.7816
agapeofnc.org

