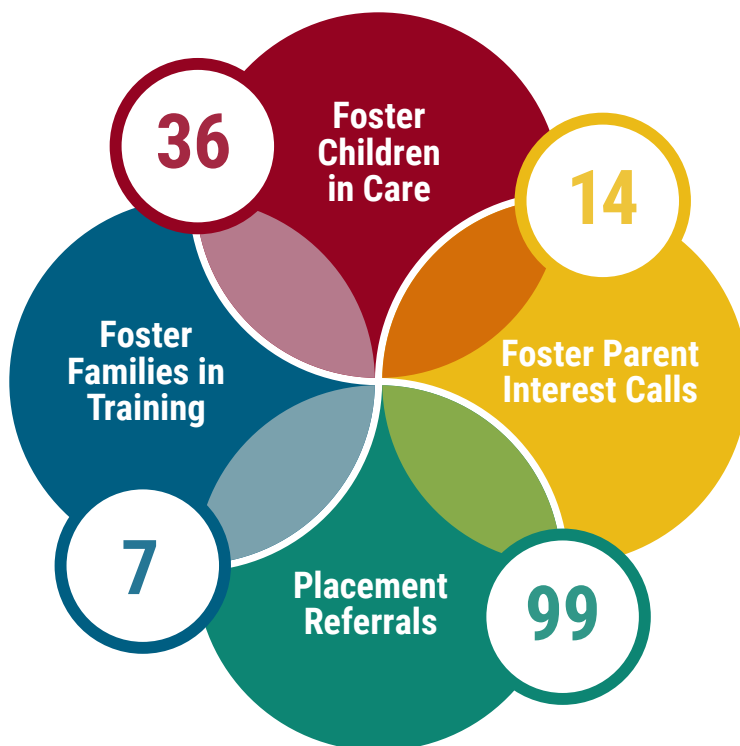




**SPRING 2023**

**THE NUMBERS** as of February 2023



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"Silent Supporters" Thank You!

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# THANK YOU!

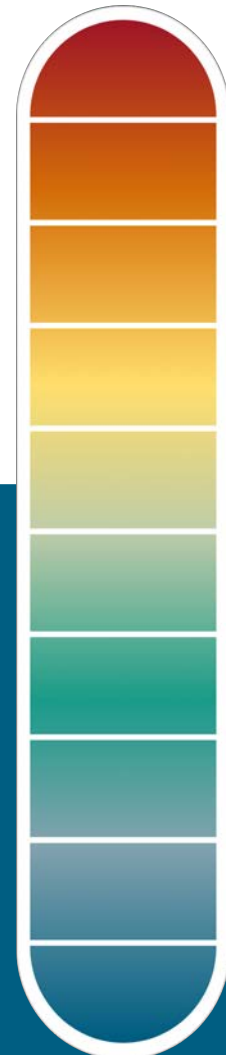
We want to thank each and every one of you for supporting our WORTH IT! giving campaign this year. You helped us exceed our goal, and we are incredibly thankful. Your support means we can continue to Raise Awareness, Acknowledge the Devastation, and Take Action against the trauma North Carolina's children have endured.

**TOTAL DONATIONS: \$158,223!**  
OUR GOAL: \$140,000



## **100%** OF MONEY RAISED WILL GO TOWARDS ONE OF THESE AREAS:

- Staff training / Family training
- Trauma responsive resources
- Trauma Responsive Programs for our children
- Travel expenses for therapy or needed treatment
- Miscellaneous expenses related to the affects of TRAUMA



# APPRECIATION FOR AGAPE'S SILENT SUPPORTERS

AGAPE of North Carolina tries to personally express our appreciation to each Donor who gives financial and/or other support during our Annual Giving campaigns and at other times throughout the year. However, there are always some Donors we are unable to Thank directly.

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*So, we're taking this opportunity to acknowledge and share our deepest gratitude for those "Silent Supporters" who generously share their resources, time, and skills – some regularly, some just on occasion – to further enhance and extend AGAPE's mission:*

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- **AGAPE Foster & Adoptive Families, Board Members, Staff, and Volunteers** . . . along with all their family & friends who support them in countless ways!
- **Churches & Community Partners** who share events and resources with AGAPE to raise awareness and lift up the families serving North Carolina's foster & adoption community.
- **Schools and Universities** who encourage Volunteers & Interns to contribute their time & talents to serve others through AGAPE of NC.
- **Donors who Anonymously** make cash or online credit card contributions.
- **Donors who give by recommending AGAPE** to receive Grants from Donor Advised Funds, like the Commonwealth Charitable Fund, Fidelity Charitable, and the Winston Salem Foundation, without taking credit for it.



- **Donors who send checks** from their investment or retirement distributions but opt not to have their name or contact information disclosed.
- **Donors who designate AGAPE of NC as a beneficiary** of the family trusts and/or their estate plans.
- **Corporate Employers** like Duke Energy, IBM, Wells Fargo, and Willis Towers Watson LLC -- who offer Payroll Deduct, Matching Gift, and Volunteer Service Programs . . . along with the individual Employees who participate in those programs to send gifts to AGAPE.
- Donor(s) who send funds to AGAPE through their **local United Way organizations**.
- **AmazonSmile Donors** who chose to support AGAPE of NC so that Amazon Foundation donated .05% of their eligible purchases. (As a result, our agency received \$1,250 from AmazonSmile Shoppers between January & September 2022!)
- **Facebook Donors** who contributed through Facebook's Charitable Foundation. (These Donors are Anonymous to AGAPE because of Facebook's Privacy Policies.)
- **Guidestar Donors** who contributed directly from AGAPE's profile on the Guidestar site.
- **Other Fundraisers** who set up their own personal Fundraising Campaigns for AGAPE and invited their family & friends to contribute and the individual Donors who did!

*To all our "Silent Supporters" -- As we respect your privacy and spirits of humility AGAPE wants you to know that we appreciate your serving, giving hearts. Again, paraphrasing 1 Thessalonians 5:18, AGAPE seeks to "give Thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will . . ."*



# AGAPE OF NC **STAFF UPDATE**



**KEITH FORTIER**  
Director of Development

Keith and his family have been a foster/adoptive home for 8 years. Professionally, Keith has been caring for children and families for almost 15 years. First as a teacher and, most recently, as a liaison between DSS & foster families as well as a Behavioral Health Partner for foster/adoptive families. He has supported others within the foster care system by helping connect churches to engage the foster care system in their community, running trauma-informed care trainings for foster/adoptive parents, and facilitating support groups.

**Keith believes with all his heart that the people of God are uniquely positioned to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities.** He has spent the last ten years advocating for children and families impacted by the foster care system and creating a network of churches and individuals who are committed to living compassionately and caring for children in need. He is passionate about seeing God's Kingdom come to all who are desperate for love and support.

In his free time, Keith loves spending time with his wife and his 6 children (ranging in age from 1 to 11 years old). He loves being a father and enjoying all of the little moments with his family. Keith loves spending time outdoors in God's beautiful creation: camping, fishing, hiking, rock climbing, and just sitting and listening to the wind in the trees.



**REBEKAH RUCKER**  
Behavior Technician

Rebekah Rucker began working with Agape in January 2023 and says she is "so thrilled to be joining the Agape team!" A few of Rebekah's favorite things are animals, cooking, traveling new places, painting, and being the mother of five children.

In 2010, Rebekah and her husband, had a 7-year-old daughter and two sons, aged 4 and 2. Rebekah writes that she "experienced the Lord's unmistakable voice and I couldn't let go of the sense that He was asking us to become foster parents. Though it felt crazy, we got licensed and accepted special need, newborn twin boys in December 2011." This turned out to be a permanent decision as those boys became "forever family" in 2014.

Rebekah adds that because of their adopted sons' disabilities, **"I have spent the last decade researching and attending every therapy, attachment, and counseling session I could access in hopes of improving the boys' chances at a beautiful future. The pool of knowledge is vast, but I have learned so much about child development, behavior, connection, attachment, trauma, and intellectual disabilities along the way."** Rebekah also recently became certified to work as a registered behavior technician in the field of applied behavior analysis. This certification allows her to work at an Applied Behavior Analysis center under the supervision of a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst.

Rebekah says she chose to work with Agape "because I believe very few things are more important than caring for the most vulnerable among us, children made in God's image. Though it hasn't been easy, and I feel like I've lived out an extended treasure hunt for resources and information, I would foster and adopt my boys again a thousand times. I am honored to work with Agape, encouraging families, spreading the message and eternal value of caring for children who need a safe space to exist in this broken world."



**APRIL ROBINSON** Administrative Coordinator

Last Summer, April Robinson began working with AGAPE of NC's Social Workers and Foster Families. **April shares that, as a child herself, she watched as her mother pastored children from an inner-city church. Her mother's example lit the passion inside April to help children in need.** April adds that her "passion was fueled further through the adoption of my two beautiful children. I am so blessed to have found an organization like Agape, whose mission and passion align with my own. My goal is to walk alongside families and help children reach their full potential and thrive within the community."

# AGAPE OF NC **BOARD UPDATE**



**ALLEN SIMMONS**

## **IN JANUARY 2023, AL SIMMONS BEGAN SERVING AS A NEW AGAPE OF NORTH CAROLINA BOARD MEMBER!**

Al has been preaching the gospel for more than 38 years. He has served as the minister at Highland Acres Church of Christ in Statesville, N.C., for over 28 years, and he also shepherds the congregation as an Elder.

Al graduated from the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions ("ETSOPM" which is now known as the Southeastern Institute of Biblical Studies) in Knoxville, Tennessee. He served as an instructor and Dean of Students at ETSOPM from 1992 until 1994. Over the years, Al has worked with congregations in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee and has spoken at Gospel meetings, lectureships, and workshops. He has also

participated in campaigns and missions in Jamaica, Bahamas, Trinidad, St. Vincent, New Zealand, and West Africa.

Al received his B.A. degree in mathematics from Catawba College and his teaching certificate from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. After serving as a middle school math teacher for over 16 years and, having been selected as a Teacher of the Year at East Iredell Middle School, Al retired from the Iredell-Statesville schools in September 2015.

Al is a Catawba College Chiefs Club Board member and a Catawba College Sports Hall of Fame inductee. He also serves on the Iredell County Board of Equalization and Review. Al and his wife, Ann, are the parents of two adult daughters, Ashley (Michael) Roseborough and Allison Simmons, who are also faithful members of the Lord's church.



**BECKY BENDER**

## **BECKY BENDER HAS ALSO JOINED AGAPE OF NORTH CAROLINA'S BOARD THIS YEAR!**

Becky lives in Richlands, NC. She and her husband, Jim, currently serve with the Roosevelt Drive Church of Christ in Jacksonville, NC (Jim is now that congregation's Sr. Minister, previously serving for many years as an Associate Minister there).

After attending Sunset International Bible Institute, Jim and Becky have worked in ministry for over 30 years. They were once part of a church planting team in San Diego, California for about 12 years. Becky describes their experience at Roosevelt Drive Church of Christ having been "blessed to be with this wonderful congregation for the last 16 years."

Becky was born in Spencer, West Virginia, adopted as an infant, and raised in Akron, Ohio by two wonderful, loving, Christian parents! She is a Mom of two and a Grandmother of one! Jim and Becky's son is also adopted.

Being an adopted child, with an adopted child, Becky says she has "always had a passion for the blessing of adoption and foster parenting." She has volunteered in the past as one of AGAPE's Crisis Pregnancy Counselors and as a liaison with Foster Families in Onslow County.

Becky loves flower gardening, flower arranging and reading, but she adds that "most of all, I love the ministry God has placed me in at the Roosevelt Drive Church of Christ. I look forward to working on the Board at Agape of North Carolina and I thank you for the opportunity to do so!"

# WRAP-AROUND CARE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM!

By Leah Hayes  
AGAPE Foster Parent Recruiter



The beauty of AGAPE of North Carolina is that we are an agency focused on the entire aspect of family. **We are built on the foundation of unconditional love, and we mimic the love that God shows to each one of us.** Without our foster families, we would not be able to accomplish our mission or purpose.

While AGAPE is dedicated to our mission of recruitment and licensing, we also **value the work of our volunteers who share our same love and passion.** Foster care does not just begin and end with our children, but it extends to parents, grandparents, siblings, and all those who are in the lives of these children. It is a goal of ours to minister and connect with those involved in the child's life. The old and familiar proverb is, **"It takes a village to raise a child."** With our volunteers' help, we can reach out to

each child's village and allow them to feel the love of Jesus by letting them know they are not alone in this journey.

We know that the journey of a foster parent and family can often be tumultuous, unknown, and sometimes isolating. **With the help of our volunteers, we can not only reach out to the foster child in the home, but we can touch the parents --** and the biological children, as well, who have also taken on the task of opening their hearts, homes, and sharing their parents.

Many believe that if they, themselves, cannot open their homes to a foster child, there is nothing they can do. That simply is not true. There are many ways our volunteers can get involved without necessarily taking on the role of a foster parent.

## HERE ARE SOME WAYS OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE GETTING INSPIRED TO HELP

### BECOMING A RESPITE PROVIDER

What is respite care?

Respite is providing parents and other caregivers with short-term childcare services that offer temporary relief, improve family stability, and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect.

Respite can be planned or offered during emergencies or times of crisis. Respite can be an hour or an overnight. You do not have to be licensed to be a respite provider.

### DONATING SUPPLIES

Often children in foster care do not have much to call their own. Donating supplies is a great way to let them know they are being thought of. Items such as toiletries, crayons, and activity books, reading material, back to school supplies, or even a stuffed animal and blanket that they can call theirs! Many times children are taken late in the night and have to sleep somewhere foreign right after experiencing the trauma of being removed. A soft blanket and stuffed animal are great ways to offer comfort.

### MAILING CARDS

This is my favorite because it does not need to involve a lot of money and it is a way to reach out in a simple, yet heartfelt, gesture of love. These can be birthday cards for the foster and biological children in the home. Birthday or anniversary cards for the caregivers in the home. They can be homemade too -- which adds just the right amount of extra love. Cards and notes can also be sent at any time just to check in and let a person know, "We are thinking about You, and We are praying for You. You are not alone."

### GIFT CARDS

This is also a great way to send help to a family.

We like to encourage gift cards from merchants, like Target or Walmart, that can provide options of relief for a family such as food, clothing, diapers or formula, books, or recreational supplies for the children.

Gas cards are helpful too, as parents tote their children to school, therapy sessions, extracurricular activities, etc. and this expense adds up.

## SPREADING THE WORD

We cannot do it without you. If you know others who are interested in volunteering their time, we encourage our volunteers to share what they are doing with others. By sharing their joy and testimony we can spread the word and extend the invite to others who may want to give back.





At the end February, Leah had the opportunity to go to Brunswick Church of Christ and present to the Ladies Labor of Love group. Leah commented that, **"These women are passionate about volunteering for AGAPE. We had a wonderful afternoon of fellowship and we have been able to collaborate outreach to some of our AGAPE families!"**

Here at AGAPE of NC, we value our volunteers and are grateful for the time and talents they share with our organization. We are committed to making the volunteer experience one that is fun and tailored to your skills, passions, and interests.

**CONTACT ME TODAY AT: [LHAYES@AGAPEOFNC.ORG](mailto:LHAYES@AGAPEOFNC.ORG) OR 401-996-1469!**

**I'D LOVE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT VOLUNTEERING TO POUR YOUR GIFTS INTO SOMEONE WHO NEEDS YOU!**

## FOSTERING & ADOPTING RESOURCES



Summit Church's "Renew Retreat" for foster/adoptive parents including plans for AGAPE to cover registration costs so as many AGAPE Families as possible can get together at the event.

**MAY 18-20, 2023**

**SUMMIT CHURCH – APEX CAMPUS**  
RALEIGH-DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

**Register Today!**

[RenewRetreat.org](https://RenewRetreat.org)



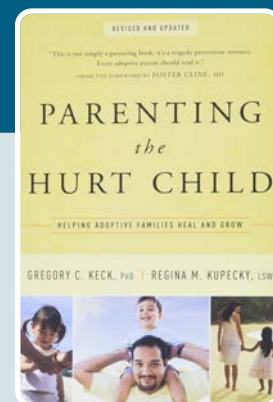
### SUMMIT CHURCH'S "RECHARGE"

Monthly respite care offering in Durham for foster/adoptive parents.

**MONTHLY**  
**SUMMIT CHURCH**

**Learn More/Register**

[Summitchurch.com/events/555](https://Summitchurch.com/events/555)



### PARENTING THE HURT CHILD

The world is full of hurt children, and bringing one into your home can quickly derail the easy family life you once knew. Get effective suggestions, wisdom, and advice to parent the hurt child in your life. The best hope for tragedy prevention is knowledge!

**View on Amazon**

[Amazon.com](https://Amazon.com)



*“When a flower doesn’t bloom, you  
fix the environment in which it grows,  
not the flower.”*

— Alexander Den Heijer

# Tribute Gifts

December 2022—  
February 2023

In Memory of

**Mr. John Lewis**

Given by  
Roosevelt Drive Church of Christ

In Memory of

**Mr. Peter Allen Moss**

Given by  
Mr. & Mrs. Theodore Fowler

In Memory of

**Ms. Nancy Spencer**

Given by  
Mr. & Mrs. John Bowling

In Honor of

**Isabella**

Given by  
Ms. Dee Ellison

In Memory of

**Mr. Antonio Williams**

Given by  
Mrs. Andrea Williams

In Memory of

**Mr. Melvin Powers**

Given by  
An Anonymous Donor

**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.

\*\*AGAPE of North Carolina is a 501c3 organization. Your gifts are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please consult your financial, tax, and legal advisors regarding the establishment of any gifting plan, related accounts and investments, and the deductibility of any gift.\*\*



**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 985, Wake Forest, NC 27588-0985

**[www.agapeofnc.org](http://www.agapeofnc.org)** • Phone: 919-673-7816 • Fax: 919-640-1901

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