



Agape Today

Thanksgiving Appeal Exceeds Goal

Our Thanksgiving Appeal goal last year was to reach \$320,000. And thanks to you, we SURPASSED our goal by receiving a total of \$340,000! Thank you for demonstrating your unmistakable support to the families and children we serve. Most of the congregations across the state of Georgia participated. Additionally, individuals donated who are not associated with participating congregations. Here are the eight churches who raised the most:

1. Campus – \$100,152
2. North Atlanta – \$32,930
3. East Cobb – \$23,951
4. Grace Chapel – \$22,381
5. Snellville – \$16,450
6. Buford – \$15,625
7. South Cobb – \$11,432
8. Northlake – \$10,498

We are grateful for the generous contributions from all participating churches and individuals! 🍌

All Things

A Message from Our Executive Director



Happy 2018! It has already been one entire year since I joined Georgia Agape. Time really does fly. In that year, we have had many highs and some lows. We came together to support staff members who experienced devastating losses, celebrated a marriage and welcomed the addition of our newest team member. We saw the finalization of numerous adoptions and welcomed new foster families and children into our fold. We have been blessed.

Over the last year, many mantras and inspirational quotes have encouraged me. One of my favorite scriptures is Philippians 4:6: *“Be anxious for nothing.”* I have to admit I struggle with this. I worry often for many children who need homes and the lack of loving foster families. I worry about expecting moms who need adoption options. I worry about families on the edge of disruption. *“But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”* I do. I continuously pray for growing support for Agape’s work. I pray for more families to choose foster care. I pray for God’s leading and direction and my ability to hear and obey. I pray that many more of you will become a part of our Agape family.

Another scripture that is very dear to me is Matthew 19:26 that tells us, *“With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.”* This work is a lot for us alone to accomplish. However, as we continue in service to others, doing this work with your support, we can meet the needs of children and families. I pray that many more of you choose to join us in support this year to both strengthen and create even more families. Remember that together, with God, all things are possible. 🍌

Racquelle Grant, Executive Director





Save the Date: May 14

While we enjoy a great day of golf, the Children's Golf Classic has become one of the premier fund raisers in the country! That's because our players aren't just players—they're FUNDRAISERS, too! Funds are received through gifts from individuals along with sponsorships typically supported by businesses. There are sponsorships to meet anyone's business needs and budget!

Men and women interested in being part of a team are encouraged to give Ken Dowdy a call at 770-452-9995 or via email at Ken@GeorgiaAgape.org. This fun and rewarding experience has become a highly anticipated event each year. We're looking to make this the best year yet! 🍌



Taking Care



Many of you may have determined a “New Year’s Resolution,” a promise or goal that you set for yourself to start the new year in a fresh way. New Year’s resolutions encompass a wide variety of things, including health, finances, spiritual life, careers and many, many others. There is no limit to the goals, or resolutions, that we set for ourselves. The ugly truth, however, is that many of these goals will be thrown to the wayside and forgotten about by the end of 2018. The healthy choices made at the beginning of the year may be long forgotten by the end of the year. The neighborhood gym at the beginning of January looks very different from the gym in May. The pews of the church . . . well, you get the point. Promises made will be promises lost. This isn't to say that keeping a resolution isn't doable. On the contrary! It can be extremely empowering to set a goal for yourself and work hard to reach that goal.

A “resolution” is a firm decision to do or not to do something. It implies that there is a great amount of determination behind this decision. For those of us with faith in God's infinite power, we know that meeting these goals cannot be left up to us alone. Recently, at our weekly staff meeting/devotional, Agape staff discussed a word or phrase, related to a resolution, that we can begin to *pray* about to assist in our quest to be better in the upcoming year. Several words were shared, but the word that stuck with me was *care*.

The literal definition of this word is “the provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone or something.” It can also mean “to feel concern or interest or attach importance to something.” It is a noun and a verb. It is something and something to do. Is this not what we try to do when we set resolutions?

For me, care means “taking care” of areas in my life: spiritual walk, health, home, family, friends, career, self, etc. It is a word that can touch every single aspect of our lives. What would happen if we all decided to just “take care”? And not only just decide—how much more powerful would it be to pray and meditate on this concept and to make it a living, breathing part of your self?

In Psalms, we are reminded to “*Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.*” What a powerful thing to know that we don't have to go it alone, that we can share our cares with the Lord and be sustained. Many of you are making changes in your life already. You may be preparing for your next great thing! Let Him help you *take care*. 🍌

LaQuisha White, Director of Social Services

Christmas Cheer!

We are Grateful for Generous Friends

Once again, our friends at Dave & Buster's at Sugarloaf Mills graciously hosted a Christmas party for our foster children, foster families and staff. We all enjoyed a delicious breakfast and games. Manager Stacy Pruitt went above and beyond for our kids! He provided game cards for electronic game play as well as a Dave & Buster's donut pillow for each child. Thank you, Stacy, and all of our friends at Dave & Buster's!

Scott White really came through for us as Santa. We appreciate his gift as a free and fun Kris Kringle!

We are also thankful for talented photographer Collin Atnip who took each child's picture with Santa and photos of the event.

Generous supporters provided Christmas gifts for our children. The Greater Atlanta Christian School and students provided gifts for 25 children including tablets, strollers and riding toys. We offer our thanks to Principal Rhonda Helms and Susan Sheppard at the GACS Elementary School, and Principal Charles Edwards and Lori Reed at the GACS Junior High School. And thank you, students!

Michelle Post, a former foster parent, provided educational books from Usborne Books & More and stuffed animals for our children. Volunteers Bev Dowdy and Jo Choate helped our children choose their books and toys. Thank you, Michelle!

A big thank you to Robby Dittmann and Boy Scout Troup 510 from the Gwinnett Church of Christ who donated a huge supply of diapers and wipes.

Generous individuals at the Buford Church of Christ provided Christmas stockings for 23 children. Our thanks to each of you with special thanks to Natalie Garner for organizing this wonderful donation.

But that's not all! The Coker Group provided items for 50 gift bags for our families. Our families chose the items that are most useful to them. Options included wrapping paper, gift bags and clear tape; diapers, pull-ups and wipes; a wide assortment of classic board games; and gift cards to gas stations and grocery stores. Our thanks to Kay Reiboldt and all of our generous friends at The Coker Group! 🍌



Kay Reiboldt of The Coker Group delivers gift bags to Ken Dowdy



Racquelle Grant (left) and Kehli Higdon (right) with Susan Sheppard of GACS



Dave & Buster's Manager Stacy Pruitt with Racquelle Grant



Students at Greater Atlanta Christian School shared the spirit of Christmas by providing gifts for our foster children



Boy Scout Troup 510 from the Gwinnett congregation who donated diapers and wipes to our foster families

2018 Empowered to Connect Conference

Georgia Agape will host the live stream of the 2018 Empowered to Connect Conference from April 13-14, 2018 from 10 a.m.–6 p.m. This conference is an excellent opportunity for individuals to learn about how childhood trauma affects development and cognition. Useful information and tools will be provided that can be used by birth, foster and adoptive parents, as well as anyone who works with children.

This is a live stream of the conference, shown at the Agape office, and programming can only be viewed onsite. Professional CEUs are available. For registration information, visit <https://georgiaagapeetc2018.eventbrite.com>.

If you have questions, please contact LaQuisha White via email at LaQuisha@GeorgiaAgape.org.



The Hutcheson Family: James and Anita with their sons, James and Gavin

Table for Four

We are celebrating the adoption of two special boys from foster care! After being in care for nearly two years, these brothers—James and Gavin—were adopted by their foster parents, James and Anita Hutcheson. Their experience in foster care has not been without a few bumps in the road, but the boys have rebounded well and are enjoying being in a forever home. Their adoptive parents are awesome and have worked to do all they can to support these boys through their transition!

Young Boy Needs Forever Home

We currently have a very loving, energetic five-year-old boy looking for a forever home. He has been in foster care for nearly five years. His foster parents are wonderful people who are committed to loving and caring for him until he finds a forever home. Until then, Agape is working closely with the Division of Family and Children Services to ensure that he is receiving the necessary services to support his overall health until they are able to find a family.



Sharalyn Donald
Resource Development Coordinator

Welcome!

New Staff Member Joins Agape

We are pleased to announce Sharalyn Donald joined us last December as our Resource Development Coordinator. Her responsibilities include recruiting and training new foster families, completing foster home studies, conducting area-wide recruitment events at local churches and facilities, and directing overall efforts to meet foster parent recruitment and retention goals. Sharalyn received her undergraduate degree in Sociology with a focus on Social Welfare from Spelman College. Sharalyn brings 38 years of experience in the private and public sector of social services to us. She has a sincere desire to enrich the lives of others while helping them grow externally, internally and eternally.

Sharalyn is married to Alfred Donald. They have four adult children and three adorable grandchildren. She enjoys music, theatre and the arts and attends the Lakewood Church of Christ where her husband serves as the minister.

Building Better Relationships



Every interaction we have is about relationship. No matter what we do or say, it is based on the relationship. We have contracts in the business world that specifies for what each party is responsible. Even when we speak or cross paths with a 'stranger,' that is still a relationship. Below are some basic guidelines or principles that will foster better interaction with one another.

1. Be honest! Scripture says 'let your yes be yes, and your no, be no.' This sounds simplistic, but we often do not say the whole truth. We often say that we are 'ok' or 'fine,' when in reality we do not feel 100%. We can be truthful and tactful, given the circumstances or situation. Depending on the relationship, we can, and should, give more. Spouses develop a language that is understood by both and things can be said that only they get. Even then the spouses can and will be misunderstood.

2. Seek relationship vs. being right! When we spend our time trying to convince others that our position is right, we often alienate them because we become opponents. It is much better to have a connection with others so that when we disagree, the relationship can help bring about a positive outcome.

3. Build one another up! Give genuine compliments to others. This is a distinctive way to give value to one another. Showing courtesy and manners can make a difference because it shows value and meaning to others when we express these. Also, saying 'thank you' or 'I appreciate...' goes a long way to encourage others.

4. Be forgiving! This may be the most important one of all. We say and do things that hurt one another. Be forgiving. It will make more of a difference for you than it will for the one who hurt you. Bitterness and justice are not things to play around with. Research bears out from those who have been married a long time: they focused on the good of their spouse and overlook the bad.

I believe these principles can have a profound effect on all of our relationships, especially those that are more intimate. If you would like to discuss how these principles may help with your relationships, give us a call at 770-452-9995. The Georgia Agape Counseling Program is here to provide guidance and help. 🍌

John McLain, LMFT, Director of Counseling

Did you know?

Georgia Agape is offering quality professional counseling services to extend our outreach to help those struggling with life's issues in our supporting churches and our community at large. We offer a sliding scale fee for those who need help paying for the counseling. Our fees range from \$30 to \$125 per session.

John McLain, LMFT, is our Director of Counseling offering Marriage, Family, Individual and Pre-marital counseling. He is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and an Approved Supervisor through AAMFT. Call our offices more information at 770-452-9995. 🍌



In Loving Memory

CARLYNN ANGUISH
 Steve & Pat Allmond
 Bill & Mary Martha Dutton
 Betty Lamberth
 Debbie Miller
 David & Michelle Parker
 Donnie & Joan Zahler

CECILE PARTEN BALL
 Paul Parten

CHARLES BASS
 Max & Glenda Harris

EDDIE BASSETT
 Naomi Fonville

RUSSELL BLACK
 Elizabeth Cadena
 Sid & Tami Heffington
 Phil & Denise Helms
 Jim & Jeanette Leben
 Butch & Hilda Nutt
 Edward & Joanne Rankey
 Ed & Donna Strickland
 Bryan & Robin Vaughn
 Tom & Sandra Weir
 Donnie & Joan Zahler

MR. & MRS. H.F. BOLLING II
 Max & Glenda Harris

T.O. & FLORENCE BOOTHE
 Dorothy Groover

LISA BOWLING
 Phil & Denise Helms

JOE BRADSHAW
 Butch & Hilda Nutt
 Steve & Betty Jo Pintur

CLIFFORD A. BRAMLETT
 Barbara Bramlett

DON & HARRIS BROOM
 Bea Broom

ROBERT BROTHERS
 Phil & Denise Helms

BEVERLY ANNE BURNEY
 Bruce & Iris Curry
 Dennis & Ann Gerdes

GEORGE BURNS
 Tom & Sandra Weir

WAYNE CATER
 Irvin & Cassie Burnett

CLARENCE COCHRAN
 Max & Glenda Harris

ESTA COCHRAN
 Max & Glenda Harris

KEN COOLEY
 Bob & Vesta Brown

JEAN WHITACRE COTTRELL
 Phil & Denise Helms

JIM & SHIRLEY DOWDY
 Ken & Beverly Dowdy
 Jo Choate
 Mike Slaughter

FRITZ & TERRY EHRHART
 Charles Ehrhart

JERRY ANN ELLIOTT
 Greg & Jane Graham

KRYSTO ROGERS EVANS
 Nelson & Shelby Rogers

ALAN EVENS, JR.
 Ken & Beverly Dowdy
 Jo Choate

CHARLIE FLETCHER
 Tom & Carol McCoy

SHIRLEY FRENCH
 Steve & Betty Jo Pintur

SCOTT GILDER
 Phil & Denise Helms

LAMAR GORMAN
 Max & Glenda Harris

MYRTLE ROSE GOSS
 Dennis Goss

REGGIE GREENE
 Bob Paschall

MARION & JILL HAINES
 Dorothy Haines

CORA HARBER
 Phil & Denise Helms

JUNE HARBER
 Talmon E. Harber
 Phil & Denise Helms

DORIS HARDAWAY
 Finis Herron

ROBERT W. HAVERLY, SR.
 Cathy Ragland

FRANCES M. HELMS
 Phil & Denise Helms

JOHN HEMBY
 Archie & Genee Crenshaw
 Ken & Beverly Dowdy
 Jo Choate
 Jean Finney
 Paul & Elizabeth Littrell

JUNE HEMBY
 Thomas & Anita Adams
 Al & Ruth Bastin
 Phil & Cindy Bowers
 Covenant Presbyterian Church
 Archie & Genee Crenshaw
 Ken & Beverly Dowdy
 Jo Choate
 Glenn & Anna Embry
 Jean Finney
 Joe & Betty Glenn
 Pat & Doris Graham
 Hardwick Primitive Baptist Church
 David & Nancy Heffington
 Phil & Denise Helms
 Paul & Elizabeth Littrell
 Sam & Patty Mankin
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 Bill & Charleen Neese
 Al & Mary Jane Rakel
 Greg & Patti Souther
 John & Marsy Thomas
 Jim Tucker
 Brent & Kimbra Wiseman

EDNA KNIGHT HENDRICKS
 Jim & Jeanette Leben

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 Mr. & Mrs. Curtis Hurt

DAVID HOLLAND
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GEORGE HUBBERT
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FLORINE LEBEN
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HARVEY MYERS
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DON SR. & SYLVIA NEWELL
 Donald & Susan Newell

DAN OSBURN
 Butch & Hilda Nutt

MARY LOUISE POOLE
 Phil & Denise Helms

PEGGY PORTER
 Daoud & Shannon Shakkour

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KURT SUMNER
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 John & Pat Pleasant

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 Newton & Leslie Collinson

GRACE THOMPSON
 Mary Ann Thompson

ROY TIPPS
 Finis Herron

NINA TUCKER
 Jim Tucker

BILL WAITES
 Jane Waites

CHARLES WALKER
 Max & Glenda Harris

ELIZABETH WEIR
 Tom & Sandra Weir

STEVE WILEY
 Irvin & Cassie Burnett

WILLIAM "BILL" WILLIAMS
 Phil & Denise Helms
 Brent & Kimbra Wiseman

BARBARA WOODSON
 Beattie Road Church of Christ

LARUE "DOLLY" YEAGER
 Richard Yeager

ROBERT YOUNG
 Terry & Patty Christian

Memorial or Honor Gift

The enclosed gift of \$_____ is given in Memory of or Honor of _____.

Please notify:

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email address _____

For memorials, relationship to the deceased _____

For honor gifts, occasion _____

Georgia Agape, Inc.

3094 Mercer University Dr., Suite 200, Atlanta, Ga. 30341



Hope Floats



When Birdee Pruitt, played by Sandra Bullock in the 1998 romantic drama film *Hope Floats*, sees her picture-perfect life come crashing down around her in spectacular fashion, she restarts her life as a single mom moving back home to Smithville, Texas. She moves in with her mother. Only now, she has a young daughter Bernice, who blames her for her parents split creating tension between the two.

Bernice finds herself living with her grandmother, having disdain for Smithville, being at odds with her mother, and wanting to live with her dad who she is certain wants her to live with him. She finally discovers her deep desire is just the opposite from reality. Late in the story, he informs her there is no room for her in his new world.

She has lost her father and by all appearances, at least to her, her family is squarely in the dysfunctional column. She doesn't feel that even her mom is there for her. Bernice is growing bitter and thinking of giving up.

In an effort to help mend the relationship between Bernice and her mother, the grandmother shares with Bernice a childhood story of her own as she's tucking her granddaughter in at bedtime one evening. In this scene, the grandmother tells a story about how her own brother once crushed an anthill, destroying the ants' home. She then describes how the ants immediately started working to repair the home. They were just little ants, but working together as a "family" they could rebuild their house.

Many of the children who come to Agape carry with them far more severe issues than this movie reveals. However, the work to rebuild is real. The work our foster families commit to is nothing short of life-changing for every child whose life we are privileged to touch. And it doesn't stop there. It takes all of us partnering with these families for the process to work. When you support the work of Agape, you directly impact the life of a child. What you do helps us find a home for that child so they can one night be in the right place, at the right time, possibly for a bedtime story that could positively impact that moment for that child.

No gift is too small, no prayer insignificant for each child in the care of our Agape families. Thank you for your continued partnership and for playing your part in the rebuilding of homes for these children. 🐜

Ken Dowdy, Director of Development



in Honor and Respect

JOHN & EMILY ADAMS

Julie Altenbach

JANE BLACKMAN

Phil & Denise Helms

DEBBIE BONADIES

Buford Ladies Bible Class

BETTY CLOER

Steve & Betty Jo Pintur

MR. & MRS. DOUG COLE

Eloise Thomas

ROGER & KATHY DENNINGTON

James & Marilyn Simpson

KAKIE FINCHER

Pamela Fincher

MR. & MRS. JIM FREEMAN

Eloise Thomas

HUNTER & JACOB FRENCH

Steve & Betty Jo Pintur

DAUDA GRIFFIN

Julie Altenbach

MRS. PATTI GRISSOM

Eloise Thomas

TALMON E. (GENE) HARBER

Phil & Denise Helms

JIM HENSON

Bill & Eloise Thomas

SKIP JACKSON

Steve & Betty Jo Pintur

TOM & DONNA JOHNSON

Julie Altenbach

MICHAEL KINGSLEY

Curtis & Shirley Kingsley

JEFF & SHARON LAMB

Jim & Pat Lamb

NANCY MARTIN

Steve & Betty Jo Pintur

JULIE MCLEAN

Julie Altenbach

BRODY MONG

Daniel & Kandis Mong

JULIE ONSTOTT

Sam Bowman

MR. & MRS. HENRY PRICE

Eloise Thomas

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Phil & Denise Helms

Jerry & Sandra Spiceland

BERNICE SMITH

Steve & Betty Jo Pintur

PEGGY SMITH

Bryan & Robin Vaughn

JIM TUCKER

Phil & Denise Helms

SUSAN VENABLE

Julie Altenbach

JIM WARREN

Bill, Mary & Kaitlin Warren

GUY WHITEHEAD

Steve & Betty Jo Pintur

DAVID & KATHY WILLIAMS

Jim Williams

Our Mission is to provide professional social services as a compassionate Christian outreach to children, families and individuals in order to enhance their prospects for a better and brighter future.

Georgia Agape Staff

Racquelle Grant, MSW, *Executive Director*
LaQuisha White, MS, LPC, CPCS, *Director of Social Services*

Charles Hampton, LCSW, *Assistant to Executive Director*
Karen Anthony, MAOM, *Director of Administration*
Ken Dowdy, *Director of Development*
John McLain, LMFT, *Director of Counseling*
Kehli Higdon, LMSW, *Assistant Director of Social Services*

Lynnette Chupp, BSW, *Child Placement Case Manager*
Sharalyn Donald, *Resource Development Coordinator*
Kimberly Hardy-Johns, *Social Services Secretary*
Cheri McLain, *Executive Assistant for Advancement*
Dana Stanley, *Accountant*
Sharon Stubbs, *Social Services Secretary*
Kim Tang, LCSW, *Maternity and Adoption Counselor*
Erica Williams, BSW, *Child Placement Case Manager*

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Greg Winnett, *Vice Chairperson*
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Jeff Bethel
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Run with Us!

Annual 5K Race for Kids is Sunday, April 15, 2018

This event will take place at the Spartan Stadium on the Greater Atlanta Christian School campus. (Details will be posted to www.GeorgiaAgape.org/newsandevents).

Event Schedule

1:30 p.m. Onsite registration begins / **2:30 p.m.** 1 Mile Fun Run/Walk starts
3 p.m. 5K begins / **4 p.m.** Awards

Course: Start and Finish are at the Spartan Stadium on the campus of Greater Atlanta Christian Schools. The 1 Mile Fun Run will be on the stadium track. The 5K will start on the stadium track and move to the Cross Country course. Fun and scenic!

Registration Options

- #1 – Register TODAY at <https://runsignup.com/5KRace4Kids>
- #2 – Race Day registration will begin at 1:30 p.m. at the stadium.
- #3 – Phantom Runner: Can't make it or can't run? You can still support Georgia Agape by signing up to participate in spirit and receive a t-shirt! Price: \$30 Race Fee + \$3.50 Signup Fee at <https://runsignup.com/5KRace4Kids>

T-Shirts: Agape 5K/1Mile Run Tee guaranteed to all participants including youth.

Awards & Goodies: Age-group awards, snacks, music, goodie bags, and more!



**Greater Atlanta Christian School
Spartan Stadium
1575 Indian Trail Rd.
Norcross, GA 30093**

Ample race parking is in the Spartan Stadium parking lot. Bathrooms are located beneath the stadium seats.

