



AGAPE volunteer Jason Hoch took on a personal challenge in his life and by helping in his community, he is finding that putting his faith and others at the top of his list is his best path to recovery.

Living a better life every day

Jason Hoch wakes each morning with the realization that he can and will be a better person that day than he was the day before. And that is how every day begins for this young man who wants to make a difference.

Jason grew up locally and graduated from Berwick High School. He was always interested in healthcare so attending Wilkes University and earning a degree in pharmacy was a dream come true. But while in college, he found himself “hanging around with a bad crowd,” a decision that eventually got him in trouble.

But that mistake became “the best thing that ever happened to me,” says this articulate and upbeat young AGAPE volunteer. After a personal journey in recovery, he saw an opportunity to turn his life around.

As part of living with the disease of addiction, Jason volunteered at AGAPE, and when his required time was completed, he “decided to keep going.” Since then, he has worked wherever is needed - deliveries, the warehouse, helping with grants. He made this choice, he says, to “serve my community with the gracious people of AGAPE,” where he shares a common goal of service and spirituality in the “healthiest place to be.”

His efforts at AGAPE became a “time for me

to give back. This work was the best way for me to love myself, to help others, and to recover.”

Jason’s dream of becoming a pharmacist is back on track, and his work with the Pennsylvania Peer Assistance Program for the profession of pharmacy is helping him at every step. His recovery includes outpatient therapy, meetings, and a strict screening process. “I am relearning how to live,” he says about this stage of his life.

Jason, who is also working on his Level 1 CrossFit training certification, noted that he is “growing up very fast” especially observing how many view his generation as narcissistic by nature. Jason is doing his best to change that view.

“Many see us as the ‘What can you do for me now generation,’” he says. “But I had to change all that, and CrossFit is helping. It is the hardest thing I have ever done.” Besides the high intensity workouts, CrossFit emphasizes the community nature of working together, something he applies at AGAPE.

As he continues to look for full-time employment, he encourages everyone thinking about volunteering to take the step. “Come in and give it a chance. AGAPE finds the best fit for everyone, everyday,” he says.

Weekly Calendar

- **AA Meetings:**
Wednesdays and Fridays
6:45 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- **AL ANON Meetings:**
Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.
- **NA and NAR ANON Meetings:**
Thursdays at 7 p.m.
- **DailyBread Meal for Community:**
Thursdays 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- **Celebrate Recovery Gathering:**
Saturday evenings at 7:00 p.m.
JourneyMate Ministries, Main Street, Lightstreet
- **Adult Clothing Giveaway:**
4th Thursday of each month
1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- **Food Pantry, Columbia County**
3rd Friday of each month
9 a.m. to 12 noon

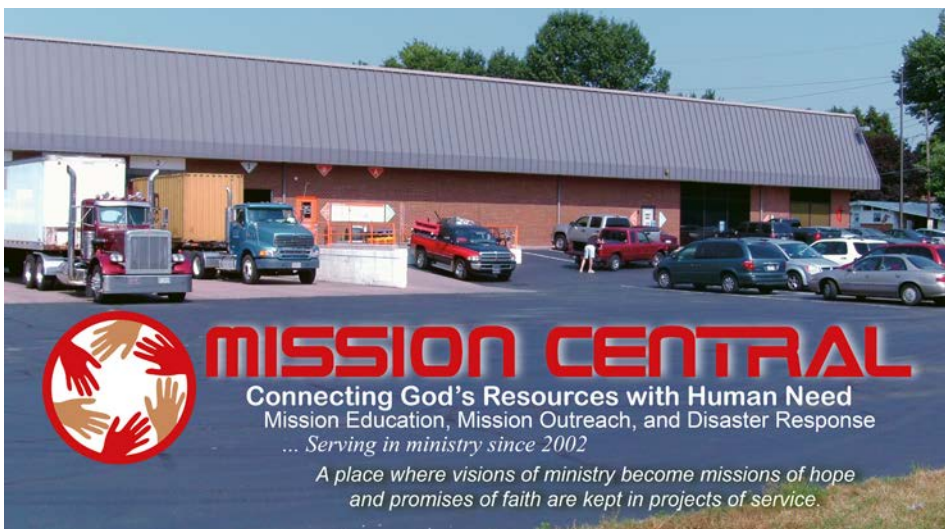
Upcoming Calendar of Events 2014

- Friday/Saturday, February 28 & March 1, Bon-Ton Community Days, Columbia Mall. Coupon books available at AGAPE
- March 12 (starting at 6 p.m.) through March 13 (11:59 p.m.), The First Community Foundation’s 30-hour Raise the Region Online Fundraising event. See our website for details
- Wednesday, March 26, Bloomsburg Chamber of Commerce “AFTER HOURS” 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. AGAPE Center

Go to www.agapelovefromabove.org for more calendar listings and updates.

Feeding the Thousands

Since January 2013, AGAPE has increased the number of DailyBread meals by over 100 clients per quarter. We appreciate the following sponsors who helped with our weekly noon meals during the fall quarter: Dent Plumbing & Heating, Inc., Sheetz, Geo Climate Control, Inc., Harrell Automatic Sprinkler Co., Inc., and Nate Snavely Nationwide Insurance. We are hoping to begin a weekly evening meal in 2014.



Mission Central responds to natural and man-made disasters with relief supplies and supply humanitarian goods and logistical services to hundreds of different ministry and social service agencies.

Generosity: Paying it forward AGAPE becomes a Mission Central HUB

'Which of these three do you think was neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He answered, 'The one who showed him kindness.' Jesus said, 'Go and do as he did.' Luke 10:36-37

When the worst flood ever hit our area in 2011, Mission Central, the mission warehouse of the Susquehanna Conference of the United Methodist Church, provided us with 2,500 cleaning kits, over 1,500 health kits and quantities of bottled water. Each fall they provide local needy children with school kits.

AGAPE can now pass this generosity on to others close to home and around the world as a Mission Central Satellite Organization or HUB, fulfilling the goal to "connect God's resources with human need." We are one of about two dozen HUBs located in central and eastern Pennsylvania and surrounding states to assure that help arrives quickly when needed.

Kelly Kocher Ross has been named coordinator of the AGAPE HUB. Kelly is

active at Wesley United Methodist Church in Bloomsburg, especially in Vacation Bible School. A wife and mother of three school age children, she accepted her new volunteer position after feeling a calling to help people in need.



Kelly Kocher Ross

At AGAPE, Kelly will coordinate donations from churches and individuals and the volunteers who assemble health, sewing, birthing and layette kits along with the cleaning and school kits. She will also arrange to transport kits and materials to Mission Central in Mechanicsburg. If interested in assisting with this mission, call AGAPE at 570-317- 2210.



Community Homemakers Kay Carter, Donna Irwin, Bonnie Burke, Mavis Heller, Judea Irwin (with children Naomi, Rachel, and Abriana), Donna Anstadt, Nancy Hess, Naomi Kinney, and Vivian Kirchman. Absent from the photo are Lois Sterner and Tina Reilly.

Warmth for Body, Soul

About every three months, the Community Homemakers, a group of quilters who meet in Asbury to enjoy Christian fellowship while making their quilts, donate 15 to 20 quilts to AGAPE. The day they arrive is an uplifting one as AGAPE staff oooh and ahhh over each unique piece. These are given to people who need household bedding.

The group is quick to meet special needs. Recently, a mother and two daughters were forced to move unexpectedly with few of their possessions. The younger girl is fond of giraffes. Within a week she had a quilt with giraffes for her new home.

From our Clients

We do what we do because it is the right thing to do. Still, hearing from clients that they appreciate our services reassures us and inspires us to do even more. Here are some notes we recently received.

"The words 'thank you' hardly seem enough, but they're coming from my heart, a heart uplifted by your kindness."

"Thank you so very much for your help in our time of need. Words can't say what the heart feels. We will forever be blessed by your kindness. Thank you."

"I'm so thankful for the wonderful gift to me to be able to keep my car running."

"Many people think that the flood happened so long ago that everything is "all better." Recovery is a very slow process. When you have nothing left to build on following a disaster, it takes a long time to get back on your feet. The grocery cards you gave us were very helpful, and we truly thank you. When we get back on our feet (and we know we will), we will most assuredly return the kindness you have shown us."

Sharing our Christmas love

AGAPE team contributes to Berwick Boulevard A team of volunteers headed by Deb Franssen, our Extended Services Coordinator, put together a display for the Berwick Boulevard. She was helped by Amber Lee, Matt Korol, Jason Hoch, and several others.

The display featured a cross, a greeting, and about ten decorated Christmas trees, each adorned with lights. Our display was sturdy enough to withstand the winds that batter many others! Amber Lee was featured on the local television news working hard on our display. Thanks to Megan Fernsler for making the sign.



Reflecting on our blessings

Letter from the Executive Director

Happy New Year. 2013 was a banner year for AGAPE. I'd like to review a few things so that we can celebrate God's blessings of yesteryear as we look forward to His blessings for 2014.

First, let's look at the comparison of 2012 and 2013 budgets and actual figures shown above.

The high beginning balance and exceptional cash income for 2012 were from donations to AGAPE's operations and disaster relief funds for the flood of 2011. All disaster relief funds were expended by May 2012.

As we have grown and gained experience, our statistical analysis has improved. In-kind statistics were incomplete for 2012 so this comparison includes cash income and disbursements only. Because in-kind donations and distributions are integral to our service, we are now set up to track them accurately and will include their cash value in all budgets and analyses beginning this year. Including these figures will enable us to receive more and larger cash grants increasing the aid we can give to our community.

In-kind donations were valued at \$254,591.84 in 2013 with \$246,540.58 worth distributed. This makes the actual value of aid to our community \$448,230.35, a figure approaching one we thought was exceptional due to the flood.

We started 2014 with a cash balance of \$70,691.64. Below is our budget for the year.

2014 Budget Income

Cash	\$228,500.00
In-Kind	\$248,900.00
Total	\$477,400.00

Expenses

Total	\$475,300.00
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As you can see, AGAPE has grown and continues to grow. The support of the community is amazing, particularly in these economically challenging times. We know that those who receive help could not make it without the community of love that is ours

in Columbia and Montour counties. There is little doubt that God's blessings and love have fallen on our community.

Need still exists. Meeting more needs of more people who are trying to become self-sufficient is our goal.

We have homeless and those who live month to month. Winter cold and

lack of full-time employment make the burden of heating homes a daily concern. Our clients cannot become self-sufficient when they cannot meet their basic monthly bills. AGAPE served 2,222 clients in 2013. The average monthly income of those clients was \$891.92 with average monthly expenses of \$922.87. Given these figures, when heat is needed, there is either no hope for heat or one or two other bills can't be paid. Help us find a better answer for our brothers and sisters.

Consider the message in Matthew 25. God bless you and yours, Eileen Chapman

“ We have homeless and those who live month to month. Winter cold and lack of full-time employment make the burden of heating homes a daily concern.”



Over the past year “Go Green with AGAPE” has shared tips on how to be more “green”. In this issue we highlight what we do at our center, practicing what we preach.

Amber Lee has really helped us be green by setting up recycling programs that not only help our environment but also financially benefit AGAPE. Proceeds from these programs cover all expenses for StoreMORE.

Our partnership with Planet Green helps AGAPE in several ways. You can help by subscribing at <http://www.planetgreenrecycle.com/AGAPE>. AGAPE receives a \$1 donation when you subscribe. Planet Green recycles ink cartridges and small electronics such as cell phones and iPads earning cash donations ranging from 25¢ to \$10. See the website for a full list. They provide postage paid mailing labels for you to send items or you may take them to the AGAPE Center. Planet Green also sells printer cartridges. For each cartridge purchased, AGAPE receives a 15% donation.

Any unusable clothing donations are recycled into other materials such as insulation. Shoes that cannot be distributed locally are recycled through Shoebox Recycling. This program sends rough but wearable shoes to needy people overseas. Unwearable shoes are recycled for cash with AGAPE receiving \$15-\$20 for each 40 pound box.

Any broken metal items received are recycled for scrap by Matt Korol and our volunteers. Over the past year enough scrap was recycled to help fund the second floor renovations.

In our office areas we take recycling seriously by recycling plastics, office paper, cardboard, aluminum cans and glass. Our DailyBread team sets aside any items that can be recycled as well.

In another effort to Go Green, AGAPE added an energy efficient natural gas powered generator to our building. This is an essential piece of equipment ensuring that AGAPE will be ready to respond in an emergency.

Megan Fernsler

Budget Comparison for 2012 and 2013*

2012		2013	
Beginning 2012 Balance: \$399,722.65		Beginning 2013 Balance: \$111,141.92	
Income: Budgeted	Actual	Income: Budgeted	Actual
Cash \$112,000.00	\$253,117.00	\$180,000.00	\$160,239.49
Total \$511,722.65	\$652,839.65	\$291,141.32	\$271,381.41
Expenses: Budgeted	Actual	Expenses: Budgeted	Actual
\$110,400.00	\$541,697.73	\$179,900.00	\$201,689.77

*Cash income and distribution only including flood relief. See text above for discussion of In-Kind income and distribution.



Love From Above To Our Community

19 East 7th Street
Bloomsburg, PA 17815

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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AGAPE Staff:

Executive Director: Eileen Chapman
Treasurer: Sylvia Richer
Case Manager: Karen Heaps
Director of Human Resources and Programs: Amber Lee
Director of Operations and Facilities: Matt Korol
Volunteer Coordinator: Barbara White
Office Coordinator: Donna Houser
IT Coordinator: Michael DeMarco
Extended Services Coordinator: Deb Franssen
DailyBread Meal Coordinator: Mary Ridgway
Addictions Coordinator: Betty Brown
PR Coordinator: Kathy Lowe
Disaster Relief Coordinator: Victoria Wilcox
Grant Coordinator and Cloth Diaper Program Coordinator: Megan Fernsler
Fixer Upper Coordinator: Victoria Wilcox
Webmaster: Sam Vetovich
Newsletter Production: Louise Naus, Ann Diserod, and Sam Bidleman

Board of Directors:

President: Pastor Susan Knorr
Vice-President: Vicky Burnside
Secretary: Sandie Yule
Valerie Evert
Larry Finnicum
Frank Gehrig
Ginger Hock
Kathy Lowe
Pastor Greg Molter
Louise Naus
Chris Renninger
Pastor David Rosenberger
Michael Spangnola
Eileen Chapman: Ex-officio member

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Joseph's Storehouse Coordinator
- Caseworker
- Extended Service Volunteers for:
Nehemiah Card Project
Fundraising
Special Events
- Prayer Warriors
- Standby Electricians, Plumbers and Carpenters for small home projects

AGAPE INFORMATION

Monday – Tuesday – Friday
Open: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Thursday
Open: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Phone: 570-317-2210
FAX: 570-317-2213
Email: info@agapelovefromabove.org
Web: www.agapelovefromabove.org



Donate On-Line using PayPal on our Website at: www.agapelovefromabove.org



Love From Above To Our Community

Financial Donation & Contribution Form

Name: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____ Apt #: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____
Check Enclosed Donation Amount: \$ _____ Dedication (If any): _____

Financial Donations May Be Mailed To: AGAPE, P.O. Box 424, Bloomsburg, PA 17815

The official registration and financial information of AGAPE Love From Above to Our Community may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania (1-800-732-0999). Registration does not imply endorsement. AGAPE is a 501(C) 3 organization.