

Issue 1  
October 2016

# HICKORY NUT GORGE

OUTREACH  
*serving needs with love & compassion*

## Board Members

Hope Wittmer, President

Patrick Bryant, Secretary

Chuck Hailey, Treasurer

Pat Cook

Ursula Harris

Linda Ratschan

## *A Message from Hope*

*Submitted by Hope Wittmer*

It's hard to believe another Summer has come and gone, and Autumn is upon us in Lake Lure. We're so lucky to be part of such a special community that offers a wonderful lifestyle that is filled with adventure, activities, and relaxation. Just as special as Lake Lure is, so are our community members - individuals, churches, businesses and organizations who support Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach (HNGO) and enable us to provide to our community members that need us the most.



## Contact Information

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On behalf of HNGO, **thank you** for all of the support you've provided, whether it has been through monetary or in-kind donations, or through volunteering time. We look forward to your continued support as we enter the very busy Fall and Winter seasons. We wish you and your family the happiest of holidays!

*Happiness springs from doing good and helping others*

- Plato



## *About Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach: Our Mission*

The Outreach is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving families in the Hickory Nut Gorge community, which extends into four counties. Our mission is to help eliminate hunger and provide emergency services with love and compassion to those in need that live in our community. The Outreach is funded solely through donations from generous members of our community, fundraisers, and local food drives. Food and other products are purchased at a minimal cost from the MANNA Food Bank (a Feeding America partner), as well as at local stores. The Outreach does not receive any federal funds and all programs and activities are fully supported by 50+ volunteers.



## *Food Insecurity in our Community*

Submitted by Bernadette Smith



Have you heard the term “food insecurity”? This is a relatively new term, established by the USDA, and defined by Feeding America as “a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. Hunger is a physiological condition that may result from food insecurity.”

According to city-data.com, 18.1% of Lake Lure residents were living below the poverty level in 2013. More astounding, 24.1% of Lake Lure’s children were living below the poverty level. It’s statistics like these that make the work of HNGO and our generous donors so important.

## *Partnering with the MANNA FoodBank*

Submitted by Bernadette Smith



The MANNA FoodBank distributes millions of pounds of food each year to over 200 partner agencies in 16 counties throughout Western North Carolina. MANNA provides food to its partner agencies at a nominal cost. HNGO is lucky to be one of MANNA’s partner agencies. MANNA delivers food to HNGO twice a month, and our volunteers unpack the boxes of food and stock the shelves, enabling clients to shop for food and other products. Thank you to MANNA for their on-going partnership!

## *How the Food Pantry Works*

Submitted by Bernadette Smith

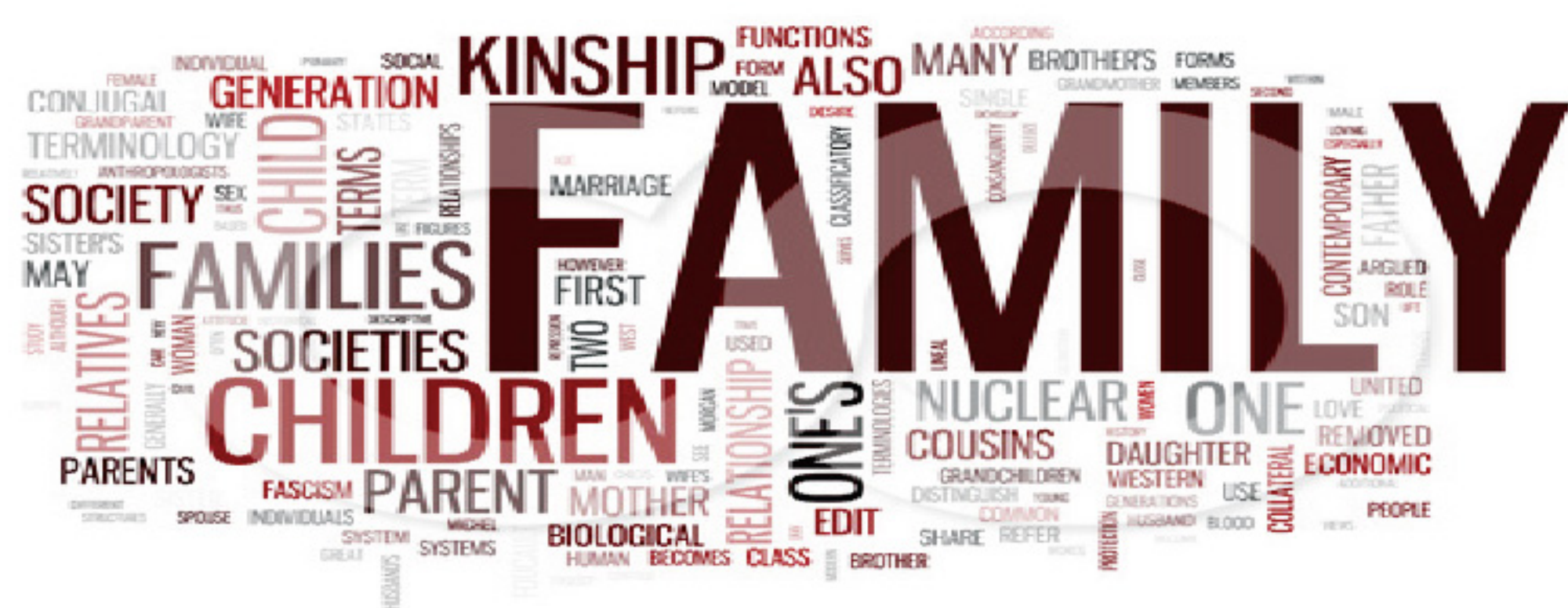
Many clients who shop at the Food Pantry receive government assistance, and the food and personal products they receive from HNGO serve as a supplement. Others may be working but not able to make ends meet, work seasonal jobs, suffer from a



## How the Food Pantry Works (cont.)

disability, have loved ones serving in the military, or have large families, and simply can't afford to provide an adequate amount of food for their loved ones.

We all know eating healthy and well-rounded food choices are so important to our well-being. The Food Pantry strives to provide a selection of healthy food options, including pantry staples and when available, fresh vegetables and fruits, and frozen and dairy items. Clients shop once a month for a 3 – 5 day supply of the food items that best suit their families.



## Who We Serve: January - October 2016

Submitted by Jennifer Spence

87%	White / Caucasian
12%	Black / African American
1%	Latino
54%	Male
46%	Female
62%	Children (0-17)
33%	Adults (18-64)
5%	Seniors (65+)
88	Average number of families served each month
362	Average number of individuals served each month

## Food For Kids Program Continues to Grow!



Submitted by Linda Ratschan

Now in its sixth year, the Food For Kids Program (FFK) continues to grow and provide school-age children in our community with well-balanced, healthy food for breakfast, lunch and snacks each weekend. This year 43 children are signed up to receive weekend “backpacks.” An additional 5 children attending LLCA receive lunch each weekday throughout the school year.

FFK is the most expensive program supported by HNGO, and costs continue to grow as the number of recipients and the cost of food increase. Despite frugal shopping, including using coupons, the cost per child is \$35 per month during the school year. We are looking for community support to “adopt” one or more of our FFK children. If you are interested in learning more about this or would like to adopt a child, please contact the HNGO office and ask for Linda Ratschan.





*Food Pantry and Food for Kids**Items Needed: On-Going*

Cereal (no high sugar)	Single Serve Oatmeal	Raisins – individual
Chunky soup	Saltine crackers	Mac/cheese boxes
Tuna Fish	Chef Boyardee	String Cheese
Fresh Fruit	Canned Fruit	Cookies
Peanut Butter	Jelly	Bread
Large Juice Bottles/Juice boxes	Cold Cuts	Cheese
Pasta	Granola Bars	Toiletry/Paper Products

*School Supplies Drive is a Resounding Success*

Submitted by Linda Ratschan

Once again we had another successful school supplies drive, providing a backpack and supplies for 65 school age children in the community.

Additionally, 26 children attending LLCA received two shirts each as part of their school uniform.

We're so happy to be able to help these children get off to a great start in the new school year.

*Holiday H.O.P.E. Bags Available Soon*

Submitted by Linda Ratschan

This year we will, once again, be distributing H.O.P.E. (Helping Other People Eat) Bags to our clients. Community members and local churches fill the bags with Thanksgiving items, enabling our clients to prepare their own meals. H.O.P.E bags will be available for community members to pick up on October 24th at the HNGO office. Items needed include canned green beans, corn, peas, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, stuffing mix, cake mix and frosting. Or if you prefer, for \$35 per family, HNGO will do the shopping.

*The Angels are Coming*

Submitted by Linda Ratschan

Many of our families struggle to make ends meet, especially during the winter months after seasonal jobs have ended. The holidays are a real challenge for many of our clients, and as such, we want to ensure they can provide a happy holiday for their families. Once again we are reaching out to our generous community to support the Angel Tree Gift Program. On November 7th, the Angel Tree will be on display at the Outreach and donors can select their Angel(s) and purchase gifts, or if preferred, can donate funds and a HNGO volunteer will purchase gifts. We anticipate we will have 200+ Angels this year. Donations should be dropped off at the office by December 7th. Thank you in advance for your continued generosity!



## *Volunteering at HNGO*



Submitted by Ursula Harris

Volunteers are the mainstay of HNGO. If not for them, we would be unable to successfully operate and help so many community members. Through July, volunteers worked 2300+ hours in the Food Pantry, with the Food for Kids Program and at the Spring Arts and Crafts Festival. This doesn't include all the hours that volunteers put in to manage administrative activities. A big thank you goes to all of our wonderful volunteers for all they do!

We are always looking for new volunteers, who come with fresh ideas and perspective, to help serve clients or work behind the scenes. If you are interested in our volunteer opportunities, please contact the HNGO office.





## *Special Thanks To Our Donors*

Several organizations made substantial donations or held drives recently and provided much needed food for the pantry! Thank you to:

- Keys Open Door Foundation
- Lake Lure Lions Club
- Upper Hickory Nut Gorge Community Center: 414 pounds of food
- Mountains Branch Library: 125 pounds of food
- Lake Lure Baptist Church: 77 pounds of food
- MANNA FoodBank for their donation of a commercial grade refrigerator and freezer.
- Riverbend Community: school supplies



Keys Open Door Foundation President - Debbie Jackson

Special thanks to all those individuals and organizations who provided food, financial support and time to help improve the lives of those less fortunate in our community this year.



Lake Lure Lions Club President – Mary Ellen Jones

*Thank you  
so much for  
your  
generosity!*



*In Memoriam**Diane Goodwin*

Submitted by Ursula Harris

We mourn the loss of our beloved friend and volunteer, Diane Goodwin. Diane, who was passionate about helping others, served on the HNGO Board of Directors and oversaw all aspects of the Food Pantry. She was the rock that kept the Food Pantry running smoothly, working tirelessly to ensure that food was ordered and shelves were stocked and ready for distribution to our clients. Diane will be greatly missed at HNGO and around the community. Diane.....until we meet again.

*Elizabeth Jones*

Submitted by Yvonne Cooley

Last December, we suddenly lost one of our beloved volunteers - Elizabeth Jones. Elizabeth worked in the

Food Pantry, participated in the Angel Tree, and was an integral part of the Arts and Crafts Festival. She was very passionate about the Gorge and the Outreach Program and her family asked that her memorials be donated to Outreach. She is missed tremendously.

*A Recap of Ways You Can Help*

Your donations are what make HNGO successful and we appreciate any and all of your support! Below is a summary of ways you can help.

- Make a monetary donation in any amount to HNGO *at any time*. The insert in this newsletter will provide all the information you need to make a monetary donation.
- Adopt a Food For Kids recipient for \$35 per month during the school year.
- Donate food for the Food Pantry or Food For Kids (see page 4). Drop off at the HNGO office.
- Select a recipient(s) from the Angel Tree.
- Fill a Holiday H.O.P.E. Bag with food items or make a \$35 donation and we will purchase the food.
- Participate in local food drives.
- Donate school supplies anytime.
- Volunteer your time at HNGO or any sponsored fund raisers.



## *Calendar of Events*

### *October*

**10/15 and 10/16:** 2016 Autumn Arts and Crafts Festival

**10/24:** Holiday H.O.P.E. bags available for pickup at HNGO for community members and churches to fill

### *November*

**11/07:** Angel Tree Program names available for selection at HNGO

**11/10:** Holiday H.O.P.E bags returned to HNGO office

**11/21:** Thanksgiving food boxes available for pickup by clients

***Happy Thanksgiving!***

### *December*

**12/01:** Last day for Angel Tree gifts/donations to be delivered to HNGO

**12/08 to 12/19:** Angel Tree gifts and Christmas meal gift cards ready for pick up by clients

**12/20 to 01/04:** HNGO office closed

***Happy Holidays & Happy New Year!***

**Visit us at [www.hickorynutgorgeoutreach.org](http://www.hickorynutgorgeoutreach.org)**