



Reaching Out

Fall 2025
Issue # 3

Post Office Box 634
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Lake Lure NC 28746

“It’s the first day of autumn! A time of hot chocolatey mornings, and toasty marshmallow evenings, and, best of all, leaping into leaves!” — Winnie the Pooh, *Pooh’s Grand Adventure*

Board Members

Karen King, President & Outreach Manager
Hope Wittmer, Vice President
Linda Stonecash, Treasurer
Monica Faherty, Secretary
Doug Stewart
Laura Krejci
Cathi Culbertson
Marla Somerville

Newsletter Editor

Chris Stonecash

2025 Calendar of Events

October 18 & 19 th	Fall 2025 Lake Lure Arts & Crafts Festival
October 20	Angel Tree Donor selection begins
November 24	Thanksgiving Distribution
December 4-19	Andel Tree Gift Distribution
December 22-26	Closed for Christmas

Contact Us

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Email: hngoutreach@gmail.com
Web: <https://hickorynutgorgeoutreach.org>

A Message from Karen

Almost one year has passed since Helene tore through Western North Carolina and the Hickory Nut Gorge. The work of healing continues in our communities. We would like to thank everyone that has contributed time, supplies, and monetary donations toward this recovery. Your generosity has been amazing!

We are still dealing with a lot of need in the Gorge. In August alone we signed up 14 new families and served over 133 households. Food insecurity continues to be our focus, and while Manna Food Bank has provided a generous amount of food for Outreach, we still need to shop weekly to supplement our supply. Please consider donating canned soups, fruits, and vegetables as well as personal care and cleaning items. Donations are accepted on Monday, Thursday, and Friday from 10 am-4 pm.

Our Thanksgiving Distribution will be on Monday November 24th. We will be giving each family a turkey or ham, along with a \$50.00 Ingles gift card.

Thank you and Happy Fall, Y'all!

Karen King
Outreach Manager
Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach

Hickory Nut Gorge 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. Outreach is solely funded through donations from generous members of our community, fundraisers, and local food drives. Outreach does not receive any federal funds. 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. All Outreach programs and activities are fully supported by 40+ volunteers.

2025 Fall Lake Lure Arts & Crafts Festival

The Fall Festival will be held October 18 and 19 in the public area next to the Lake Lure Inn. We are delighted that we could resume this community fund-raising event after Hurricane Helene forced the cancelation of the last two festivals. Find answers questions on our website at <https://lakelureartsandcraftsfestivals.com/>, including a list of vendors and a map of booths. The Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/people/Lake-Lure-Arts-and-Crafts-Festivals/100057332063536/> has notices and announcements and lively conversations about the Festival. We are looking for volunteers to register vendors Friday night and Saturday morning, handle traffic during the Festival, and answer questions from attendees. Please contact us at LakeLureArtsAndCraftsFestivals@gmail.com.

Changes to the Board of Directors



Patti Stewart has retired, after a decade of service, from the Board of Directors of Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach. Patti did many of the “quiet things” on the Board. She organized the banners for Outreach’s Lake Lure Arts and Crafts Festivals, mounting them across Lake Lure. She handled volunteer communications, sending out brief notes that were a joy to read. She ran our scholarship program, wading through procedures and regulations and requirements; one recipient worked her way through a nursing program and is now serving the local community.

Matt Dolan, a long-time board member, has passed away. He, like other board members, was a jack of all trades. He was head of the Lake Lure Arts & Crafts Festival Coordinating Committee, handling the multiple challenges of setting up a temporary tent city with power, permits, garbage collection, and policing. He organized the effort to acquire the shed next to Outreach to replace the storage we lost when our annex became the ABC Store.

To replace Patti Stewart and Matt Dolan, board members Cathi Culbertson and Marla Somerville have been added to the Board. You can find detailed biographies of these board members at our website: <https://hickorynutgorgeoutreach.org/board-members/>.

Custom Built Table and Chairs by BUILT-SMART Woodworking

We announced that Steve Smart, a talented local woodworker, was donating a custom table and chairs to Outreach, with the intent that Outreach could auction it off to generate funds for our services. Steve completed the dining-room set (which is beautiful). A friend of Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach purchased it for \$2,000. Steve delivered the table and chairs to buyer who is delighted to have such quality furniture in their home. Steve Smart will have a booth (#70) at the Fall Lake Lure Arts & Crafts Festival (October 18 & 19), displaying his excellent craftsmanship.



School Supplies



While Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach is primarily a food pantry, we also take care of other needs in the community. One of those needs is school supplies. This Fall, we gave out over 100 backpacks full of school supplies! Thank you to Fairfield Mountains Chapel, Upper Hickory Nut Gorge Community Center, Mercy Chefs, Church of the Transfiguration, and everyone else that donated supplies for the kids in our area!

What Goes Out Must First Come In

Outreach acquires food that it distributes from many sources. One of the most important sources is Manna Foodbank. A couple times a month a big Manna truck shows up with the food that we have requested for our clients. Unloading that truck and storing the food that it contains on shelves and in freezers and refrigerators is a big job. The Blake, Macali, and Hoyos families came to Outreach to help us unload our Manna delivery. Thanks for all the help!



Community Support for Outreach

We are grateful for the support that we receive from our community. One example of this is Steve Duerr from the Congregation of Rutherfordton Presbyterian Church that donated money and supplies to Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach.

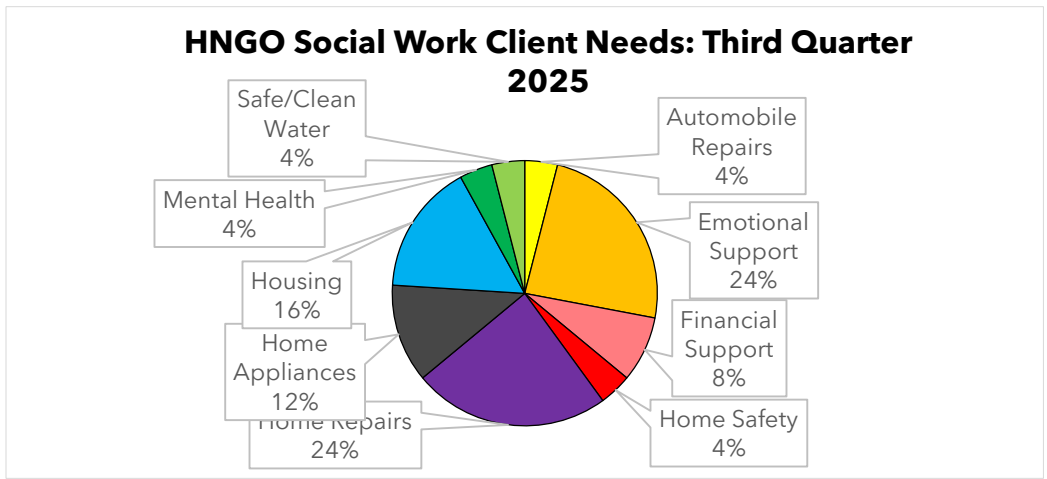


Our Generous Community

Dr. Anthony Hicks, Pastor of Hills Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, coordinated with surrounding churches and business to collect donations for those impacted by the Hurricane. After consulting with the Town Manager of Lake Lure, this group worked with Outreach to donate the money to the three families that had the greatest need. Dr. Hicks met privately with each family to present the donation. Thank you to Lower Pender Mission, Union Chapel MBC, New Hope MBC, Aray's Quality Cleaning Service, St. John MBC, Wath Chapel MBC, and Friendship MBC.

Social Work Summary – July 2025 through September 2025

Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach continues to provide Social Work support to clients who have needs beyond food insecurities. During the quarter, Outreach provided social services support to an average of 14 clients per month. In addition to food insecurities, clients had the following needs:



Hickory Nut Gorge Social Work Outreach helped meet these client needs through coordination with the following community agencies and businesses: Advent Health, Financial Aid, Amazon, Canoe Restaurant, Council on Aging, Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration, Fairfield Mountains Chapel, FEMA, Heath Jackson Auto Repair, Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach Board Members, H&R Grading Company, Home Depot, Housing Assistance Corporation in Hendersonville, Interfaith Ministries, Isothermal Planning and Development Commission, Lake Lure Fire Department, NAMI of South Mountains, Polk Referral Center, Rutherford Housing Partnership, Salvation Army, Samaritan’s Purse, Steve Deckert Handyman Services, Shane Core Handyman Services, Sunny View Fire, Department, The Free Clinic – Hendersonville, and Yokefellow. Thank you so much.

As an example of the help that we provided, this client’s ramp was unsafe as you can see in the first photo below. The HNGO Social Worker assisted the client in applying for assistance with home repairs through Rutherford Housing Partnership. Their organization replaced the ramp at no charge to the client.

