



Reaching Out

Spring 2026
Issue # 1

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**“To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow”
– Audrey Hepburn**

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2025 Calendar of Events

March 6 to 8	The Rumble- Carolina Climbing
April 24	Lake Lure Arbor Day
May 1&2	Lake Lure Pirates & Parrots music festival
May 8	Swim for Recovery
May 9 &10	Spring 2026 Lake Lure Arts & Crafts Festival

Contact Us

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Donate to Outreach



A Message from Karen

It has been quite the winter, with one weekend of ice, one weekend of snow, and one weekend of bitter cold in a row! We are anxiously awaiting spring, though I am seeing snowflakes blow by the windows as I type. Soon the flowers will be blooming again, and our lake will be restored to its beautiful state. Even as we move into warmer weather, the need in the area is great, and we are adding new families monthly.

Outreach would like to thank the folks of the Firewood Ministry from Church of the Transfiguration in Bat Cave for helping so many of our neighbors stay warm this winter. Your efforts are very much appreciated!

Thank you for all your generous donations, whether through time or financial assistance, to help us serve those in need here in the Hickory Nut Gorge. We could not do this without your support.

Karen

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.

Spring 2026 Lake Lure Arts & Crafts Festival

The Spring Lake Lure Arts & Crafts Festival will be held May 9 & 10 in the public area next to the Lake Lure Inn. We are delighted that we can continue this community fundraising event after Hurricane Helene forced the cancelation of two festivals. As of this writing, we have 60 plus quality vendors with almost two months to sign up. We already have some really good food vendors including Leisa's Kettle Korn, Kole Kole Ice, Mountain Man BBQ, and Nectar of the Vine. You can get a full list of vendors at our website: <https://lakelureartsandcraftsfestivals.com/vendors>.

We have a Facebook page that posts announcements and answers questions that our website does not cover: <https://www.facebook.com/people/Lake-Lure-Arts-and-Crafts-Festivals/100057332063536/>).

Finally, there is a Facebook event that can be used to coordinate and plan your group's visit to the Festival: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2302244500275469/>

For the Love of Art ~ and Our Community



On the first day of the Festival, the Lake Lure Artists will return to the Lake Lure Beach Pavilion. This talented group of local artists gathers not only to share their creative work, but also to give back to the community they love.

Visitors will enjoy a diverse showcase of original art: paintings, fiber art, pottery, jewelry, stained glass, gourd art, photography, fluid art, wood carving, handcrafted items, and even edible art. Art pieces will be available for purchase, and many artists also welcome custom commissions. Each piece reflects the passion and dedication of artists who believe creativity can make a difference.

In addition to artwork, the Lake Lure Artists will offer homemade delicacies available for a donation. All proceeds will benefit the Food for Kids Program at Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach, helping to provide meals to local children in need.

To make the day even more special, each participating artist will donate an original piece for a raffle drawing held at the end of the day, May 9, 2026. Proceeds from the raffle will also support the important work of Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach.

Help Comes in Many Ways



Every year our community hosts Super Bowl parties. Many of them ask the participants to bring cans of Soup, making the parties Souper Bowl parties. Thanks to Carol Wolfe who brought canned soup donations from their annual Souper Bowl party.

Community Support for Outreach

We are grateful for the support that we receive from our community. One example of this is Fairfield Mountain Chapel's donation of blankets to be distributed to our clients. A blanket along with food and compassion can make a huge difference for our clients.



Organizations that Help

Outreach is part of a community that helps those in need. Special thanks to the following for their support:

Keys Open Doors Foundation, Chimney Rock State Park, Riverbend Community, Upper Hickory Nut Gorge Community Center, Lake Lure Lions Club, Lil's Thrift Shop, Bill's Creek Community Center, 1927 Lake Lure Inn, Grey Hawk Bar and Gardens, Food Lion, Highlands Lake Lure, and the Lake Lure Artists.

We love our Volunteers



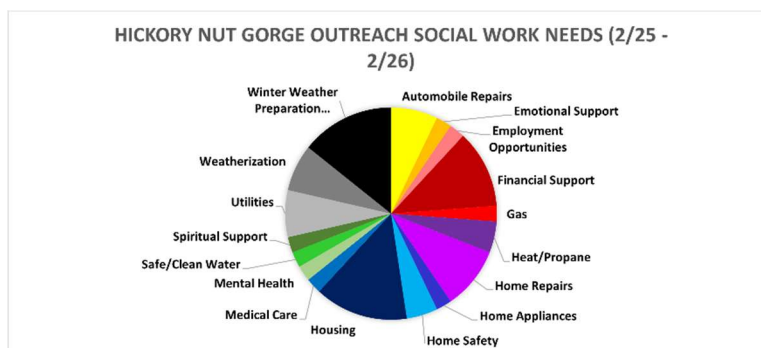
Outreach volunteers are the backbone of our organization. They help unload Manna food deliveries, stock the food pantries, prepare weekend boxes for Food for Kids, assist clients as they shop, and perform many other tasks to help our community. We are always looking for new volunteers interested in supporting the mission at Outreach. For information on volunteering please contact our office.

In January, Outreach held a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon at the Bills Creek Community Center, which donated the use of the center. All our volunteers were invited. The event was catered by the Highlands Reserve restaurant in Lake Lure to rave reviews. We thank Megan Sherrill, Owner, for making the event so special.

**Social Work Summary - Expanding Support Beyond Food Assistance
December 2025 and February 2026, Laura Krejci, Volunteer Social Worker**

Between December 2025 and February 2026, Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach continued its commitment to serving individuals and families whose needs extend far beyond food assistance. During this period, the Social Work program supported an average of 12 clients per month, providing individualized support and coordinated services to help stabilize clients and families facing complex challenges.

While food insecurity remains a primary concern, many clients required additional support to address underlying barriers affecting their overall well-being. Common requests for assistance during this time included: Housing stability and eviction prevention, Utility assistance, Transportation support, Access to medical care and prescription assistance, Mental health referrals, Employment and income support, Guidance navigating community resources, and Emotional and spiritual support.



Personalized Support Promotes Stability

These requests reflect the diverse challenges facing individuals and families in the Hickory Nut Gorge region. Many clients required multiple interventions to achieve meaningful stability. For example, one client with a young child was seeking food assistance and was also facing pending eviction. Through coordination, referrals, and direct advocacy, the Outreach program was able to connect this individual with rental support, helping prevent further crisis and creating a path toward security for the family.

Another Outreach client needed urgent help with critical home repairs, specifically a roof that had started leaking. She is a single woman working as a cook at a nearby restaurant, without the financial means to address the damage to her aging mobile home, which was further compromised during Hurricane Helene. Because the home is not in her name, she was ineligible for assistance from other organizations, leaving her with few options to tackle these urgent structural issues. Thanks to grant funding from the Gateway Wellness Foundation, Outreach was able to repair her roof, preventing further decay and reducing the risk of mold, ensuring a safer and more secure living environment.

Community Partnerships: A Foundation of Support

The success of the Social Work program depends on strong, collaborative partnerships with local agencies, nonprofits, healthcare systems, and businesses that provide specialized expertise and resources. Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach is deeply grateful for the continued collaboration of community partners who make this work possible. Through shared commitment and coordinated care, we are able to offer holistic support that strengthens individuals, families, and the broader community.