



The Servant

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE BLAND MINISTRY CENTER

FALL 2019

Last semester, two Bluefield College students noticed that many of their peers were struggling with hunger. From a survey that they sent out to fellow students, they found that two-thirds of respondents stated that they not had enough food at some point during their time on campus, and almost half have experienced inadequate food supply three or more times per term. More than 75 percent of respondents know of fellow students who are hungry.

There are plenty of barriers to attending and completing college; hunger should not be one.

Bland Ministry Center has been working with Bluefield College students and staff to establish a food pantry on campus for any student experiencing hunger or food insecurity --- not having reliable access to sufficient, nutritious food. No student should have to choose between dinner or deodorant; paying a utility bill or eating nutritious meals.

Students are able to pick up food and other essential items from Rams CARE Cupboard (Creating Access, Reaching Everyone) during operating hours, three days per week this semester.

There will be many ways to get involved with this project! Individuals and groups may collect non-perishable items to help stock the shelves, and they are also welcome to sign up to work a shift on campus. Bland Ministry Center is also collecting financial donations in order to purchase reusable grocery bags for distributing food as well as food items at bulk prices from Feeding America.

If you would like to join Bland Ministry Center and Bluefield College in making sure students have regular access to nutritious food, please call BMC at 276-688-4701.

Bluefield College was established in 1922, and is located in Bluefield, Virginia. The vision of the College is to graduate servant leaders who can go out and transform the world. The key to being a servant leader is to be a servant first, ensuring that other people's highest needs are being served. There can be no better example of this then working together with Bland Ministry Center to ensure our students have reliable access to nutritious food. We are excited to be partnering with Bland Ministry Center in this endeavor.

Dental Operations are Expanding

More than 35 years ago, the two-car garage on BMC property was converted into a dental clinic with equipment donated by Dr. Thomas Orme of Purcellville, VA and financial support from the Virginia Baptist Mission Board. Since 1985, volunteer dentists have been, and will continue to be at the heart of our dental program.

For the last ten years, the Bland Ministry Center has also received funding from the Wythe-Bland Foundation to hire a dental staff to serve patients from Wythe and Bland Counties. A recent partnership with Bland County Medical Clinic has expanded the patient base as they provide care two days per week out of the Bland office. In spite of Bland Ministry Center staff serving patients four days per week, there are still many unserved dental patients, especially children, in Wythe and Bland Counties.



Dr. Graham Hoskins

What could occur if children vulnerable to disease and infection could be welcomed in a “kid-centric,” caring environment? What could occur if parents were exposed to caring, non-judgmental providers who answered their questions and provided them with educational resources and tools needed to promote their child’s dental health? We believe “magic”—or the planned and systematic reduction of dental disease which plagues the underserved population of Southwest Virginia.

In recognizing our mission to meet both physical and spiritual needs, our board of directors has approved an expansion of dental services to ensure that everyone in our region has access to quality, affordable care. **Because of generous funding from Wythe-Bland Foundation, construction is underway to renovate the lower level of the Brock Hughes Medical Center building into Big Walker Dentistry, the five-operatory satellite clinic of Bland Ministry Center.**

Dr. Graham Hoskins and staff will continue to provide excellent care in Bland. Dr. Tonya Parris-Wilkins has been hired as Dental Director; she will serve as provider at Big Walker Dentistry while overseeing all dental operations at Bland Ministry Center. She is the immediate past president of the Virginia Board of Dentistry. In addition, she is a Fellow of the American Association of Hospital Dentists and a Master in the Academy of General Dentistry. Dr. Parris-Wilkins is a highly capable, compassionate dentist who we are excited to work with.



Dr. Tonya Parris-Wilkins

In addition to their regular work in the office, staff will also find themselves inside local elementary schools serving uninsured children as well as hosting Wytheville Community College students for a hygiene rotation weekly. Most importantly, they will continue working with volunteer dentists, oral surgeons, hygienists, and assistants that travel to Southwest Virginia to serve patients!

Join us on Saturday, November 23 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. for an Open House at Big Walker Dental! We can’t wait to show you the new space and tell you how everything has fallen into place, from donated dental equipment to an amazing team. You can find the office by using 450 W Monroe St, Wytheville, VA 24382 in your GPS and coming to the rear, lower entrance of the building.

We're Turning 40!!

In 2020, Bland Ministry Center will celebrate its 40th year of meeting physical and spiritual needs in Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia! While we reflect on how far we've come, our board of directors has also been tasked with considering where we wish to position ourselves moving forward. They have established a Statement of Vision and Values, available on our website, including objectives that should be met by 2030 in order to maintain and grow the services offered throughout the region.

But it's not all just serious planning for the future! To celebrate, Bland Ministry Center will encourage churches, local businesses, and friends to participate in our "Year of 40." You can send in \$40 or make it your church's goal to bring in 40 canned good items monthly in 2020. Your Sunday School class can collect 40 backpacks for next year's school supply distribution. Your Awana group can assemble 40 dental hygiene packs for a special service project. Pick a program you're passionate about and collect 40 items per month or for the whole year, or send in a special \$40 "birthday gift;" undesignated money helps us keep the lights on!

Thank YOU for keeping our doors open this long! We're going to have to celebrate extra hard for 50!

Christmas in July

We truly start planning for Christmas IN JULY! It's an abomination to some, a delight for me, and absolutely necessary for Bland Ministry Center. This December, we will distribute 500 Christmas food boxes to pre-registered families throughout our region. East River Baptist Association churches will collect food items, the Loftis family of Boydton will organize a collection including Christmas shoeboxes, and area businesses will adopt local children to bless with Christmas gifts. Our volunteers will register families for food or gifts, host mission teams, and take inventory of thousands of cans of beans and corn and carrots!

Find the "Sign-up Genius" on our website to commit to collecting all or a portion of a specific food item. If you don't see your favorite Christmas treat and would like to collect something extra, let us know! We're excited to work alongside you to spread Christmas cheer! Give us a call to find out ways even more ways you can get involved.

Honey Baked Holidays

Through November 15, you can purchase a Honey Baked Ham gift card through the website below to use in stores or online- YES, they will MAIL YOU one of those sugary-coated hams for your holiday meal! Simply visit our fundraising dashboard and have a digital gift card emailed to you immediately or request a plastic card in the mail. Your chicken salad combo won't cost you any extra, but Bland Ministry Center will receive 20% of your gift card purchase! All monies raised will go towards helping to purchase items for our Christmas boxes.

https://honeybakedfundraising.com//fundraisers/Bland_Ministry_Center

(We don't travel to all of you Central and Eastern VA churches without looking for two things: Duck Donuts and a HBH Ham Classic on rye!)

What's Next

November 11-13 BGAV Annual Meeting

If you are attending this year's meeting in Roanoke, make sure you stop by our booth! If your church has a box or two of items collected for Bland, have your Messengers drop them off with our staff!

November 23 Open House at Big Walker Dentistry

Tour the new facility at the back of 450 W Monroe St, Wytheville, VA 24382
1:00-3:00PM

December 6 Christmas Box Packing Party

Will pay in the form of hot chocolate and Christmas cookies
5:30PM



This Summer, mission teams from across Virginia, as far south as Georgia, and as far north as New Jersey, completed 35 home repair projects in addition to the work completed around the office. Whether you stayed with us for a day, a weekend, or a whole week, we appreciate your help! Would you consider contributing to our Blue Envelope Project for the 2020 construction season?

If you would like to hold a special collection, please consider the following needs:

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| Denture Kits for storing and cleaning | Walmart gift cards | Cereal |
| Floss, ADA toothpaste, toothbrushes | Ramen noodles | Hamburger Helper |
| Socks & Underwear (new, in package) | Crackers | Canned Meat |
| Office Supplies (copy paper, ink pens) | Peanut Butter | Jelly |
| Kid-Friendly, Shelf-Stable Snacks | Fruit Cups | Oatmeal |