



The Servant

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE BLAND MINISTRY CENTER

SPRING 2018

We cannot wait for the last of this snow to melt away! March came in like a lion, so we're hoping the rest of our year will go by like a lamb. We certainly wouldn't mind a calm, uneventful spring and summer around here! We associate spring with freshness, renewal, and growth. At the Ministry Center, we are looking forward to spring this year as a chance to renew our very tired spirits. 2017 was filled with such a tremendous amount of growth that we frankly found ourselves overwhelmed and exhausted by the end of the year. And to go out with a bang, Dee Dee was finally scheduled for her long-awaited knee replacement surgery on December 27.

This year began with us offering more services to more families than ever, and operating with new buildings and vehicles for more efficient delivery of those services. We cannot fully express our gratitude to our friends at Blanket America who gathered the designated funding for those projects because they recognized our need for safer transportation and a more organized and professional space for our clients to "shop" our shelves.

But of course with all of the "new" and "expensive" things sitting right outside our office door, there are also lots of new responsibilities and stresses (a new electric meter and vehicle insurance, for instance). We would be lying if we said that we weren't a little worried about our finances at the moment as things have gotten pretty tight around here.

There has been no slack in donations for our various programs. Our food pantry shelves are always replenished just when we start to worry that they may be getting low. Clothing and home goods are brought in and sorted on a daily basis. When we encounter shortages of items like Ziploc bags and toothpaste, you precious people respond with boxes of supplies to help us meet our needs in serving our clients.

Unfortunately, none of these programs can be sustainable without your continued financial support to literally keep the lights on. What sometimes looks like abundance on our little campus in Bland is really very often "just enough." God has never let us down, often knowing our needs and working out provisions before we can even act. But we have to tell you, we have seen God work through people like you in ways that still amaze us. Your support, even if it's just \$15 a month, has kept our organization running, fulfilling our mission of "meeting the physical and spiritual needs of our community" for nearly 40 years now.

If you can give financially, of course you will have our sincerest gratitude. Even if not, we hope you take from this an understanding that we will never *not* value your support or get "too big" to need your help. We strive to be good stewards of what we are gifted, and we are careful with each dollar that passes through our office. The misconceptions that we battle about our programs or the way we are run are overwhelming, and we hope that you will serve as our ambassadors to inform people of what goes on at the Bland Ministry Center through your support. If you ever hear that we're doing something that you don't understand or doesn't seem right, come ask us about it. Most importantly, we covet your prayers as we continue to serve the people of Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia. Despite our exhaustion with all of the growth that has recently taken place, we have even more new programs and partnerships on the horizon that we can't wait to share with you. Stay tuned!

Spring Cleaning

It was a long winter without Dee Dee, but somehow our staff survived (by “somehow,” I mean we kept her home phone lines hot seeking her advice). In her absence, we decided to tackle the semi-organized chaos that was her office and tidy the space up in celebration of her 25th year at Bland Ministry Center. She would normally take this opportunity to tell you that she started working here when she was 15, but you’ve probably heard her tell the joke before, and you definitely know that it isn’t true.

As a testament to how well-loved our Director truly is, almost all of the work in her new office was donated, including refinished hardwood floors from a friend in Appomattox, a shiplap wall from her husband, and a new desk from the guys at Country Living primitives in Bluefield, VA, among many other projects that are going to make the space significantly more functional. She was so pleased when she came back to work and we gave her a Fixer Upper style reveal. We cannot thank everyone enough for helping us spruce up our campus and make us look a bit more professional on the very tiny budget that we have.

We would love to have you stop in for a visit to check out the new space and catch up with us, but please, do it soon before The Dee Dee Effect returns and she is once again wading in file folders and boxes of IcyHot bandages!

Visit to our Dental Clinic brings about complete nutritional overhaul for local family

According to Virginia Dental Association Foundation, “oral health influences all aspects of our lives -- overall health, appearance, and even employment. Studies repeatedly show that poor oral health and diseases of the mouth can lead to other serious concerns, including diabetes and cardiovascular disease.” Our clinic team makes it a priority to impress this upon their patients, not just to brighten their smiles but to improve their overall quality of life as well.

A husband and wife visited the clinic last fall during a volunteer clinic and were asked what seemed like a strange question: “What do you drink?” Their answer was almost exclusively soft drinks. They were shocked that drinking soda, especially in such high quantities, could be a major cause in their tooth decay and poor oral health, not to mention their overall physical health. Unfortunately, these adults had already experienced so much decay that the majority of their teeth were beyond repair.

Both husband and wife have received follow-up appointments in grant-funded clinics for extractions and now are scheduled for dentures. At their most recent extraction appointment, our clinic staff was shocked by their appearance! The clinic coordinator, Vanessa, noted a very healthy overall look about the couple, and the wife shared with her the changes that her family had made since their first visit with the volunteer dentist. They never knew that soft drinks could have such a negative effect on their health, and it has since been cut out of their diet, and their household, altogether. The couple has switched to primarily water, and so have their children. Even though the dentists could not save their teeth, these parents recognized the impact sodas were having on their health and the health of their children, and took the initiative to do something about it.

While we can’t deny that a fizzy caffeinated drink sometimes hits the spot, don’t forget that the sugar in these drinks (or acidity in diet sodas) is attacking the enamel on your teeth. If you just can’t do without an occasional soft drink, try to have it with a meal, rinse your mouth with water after, or brush your teeth. But better yet, try eliminating soft drinks altogether, and find out how much better you’ll feel! It’s a simple change, but has had an incredible impact on this family. We very much appreciate our dental staff and volunteers for caring enough about our patients to ask questions and make sure their patients are educated on proper oral hygiene.

UPCOMING EVENTS

4.20 Blue Jeans and Bands Concert

The Bluefield College Music Department presents its annual Blue Jeans and Bands Concert featuring the BC Concert Band combined with students from area high schools. This informal concert will be an entertaining trip to the beach as the band presents music about the ocean and beach, including the music of the Beach Boys and Jimmy Buffett. The performance will take place at Bluefield College's Harman Chapel from 7:30-9:30pm. Admission is free, but they ask that you bring a jar of peanut butter for Bland Ministry Center's food pantry.

5.18 Hope & Care Golf Tournament

The 14th Annual Hope & Care Golf Tournament will be held at Fincastle on the Mountain in Bluefield, VA. Registration for this year's tournament is at a reduced rate of \$65 per golfer or \$260 for a team of four. The fee includes green fee, cart, grab bag, breakfast snacks, and a catered lunch by Fincastle's new chef, Kathy Matney. For an additional \$15, golfers may also purchase their "junk," which includes a red tee, throw, and mulligan. Businesses may also choose to become a hole sponsor (\$50), corporate sponsor (\$100), or send in a gift for door prizes. It's a fun day of fellowship, but for an important cause. All proceeds from the tournament will be used to purchase materials for minor home repair and handicap ramp construction projects throughout our region. Last year more than 37 projects were completed by visiting mission teams and local volunteers. To register, visit www.blandministrycenter.org under the news tab, or come early the morning of May 18. Registration will begin at 8:30, with a shotgun start at 9:00.

6.9 Bear Jam

Bear Jam is Bland Ministry Center's biggest outreach event of the year, held the second Saturday of June each year. It's a fun night of worship and family-friendly entertainment. This year's headlining act is Citizen Way, a Nashville-based contemporary Christian band with singles like "How Sweet the Sound," "Should've Been Me," and their current radio hit "Bulletproof." Local performers will be selected for opening acts, with a Kid Zone and local food vendors set up. Tickets are just \$10 for a quality faith-based event right in our back door, and we have a great opportunity to share the Gospel through music. Our hope with this event is that our local churches come together to worship and to encourage each other in our faith (Hebrews 10:24-25). Bring your lawn chair and a friend! Gates open at 5:00, and tickets may be purchased on our website under the Bear Jam tab.



**Bland
Ministry
Center**

FOOD PANTRY • CLOTHES CLOSET • DENTAL CLINIC • HOME REPAIR



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

ADA accepted dental supplies (single-pack adult toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, denture kits)

Socks & Underwear (new, in package)

Cleaning Supplies

Lowe's gift cards

Office Supplies (copy paper, ink pens)

Peanut Butter

Cereal

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