



The Servant

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE BLAND MINISTRY CENTER

FALL 2017

Dear Friends,

When discussing what our priorities are at the Ministry Center, you've likely heard me use the phrase, "whichever fire is burning hottest." Mission teams and volunteers maintain many programs and special projects under the umbrella of the Ministry Center, and all are of equal importance to me and our Board of Directors. That is not to say that each area of ministry always gets the same amount of attention from our staff. We trust our volunteers to help maintain areas like the food pantry and the clothes closet, even though both have been operating well above their normal capacity with equipment that has seen far better days. They work faithfully and with happy hearts to serve others in need, even when their working conditions are not ideal.

Our visitors notice these positive attitudes when they visit, but they also recognize needs around the center that might be affecting morale as well as efficiency. Several years ago, a local gentleman suggested we pave our parking lot around the food pantry. Sure, that would be nice, but how would we afford it? God had laid it on his heart to pay for the service himself! We know that God is working on mighty things around our campus in Bland, but still, we so often get caught up in our various needs that we let ourselves worry how we'll get by and we forget to dream big.

Over the last few years, we fell into that condition of worry and stress. Our new warehouse addition was busting at the seams with donations, and we often had to turn down large loads of furniture or clothing from a faithful donor organization, Blanket America. New mission teams were being turned down because there was no space to offer them room with the mission house booked solid through the summer. The main office became storage space for the rest of the center, and the clutter created a negative atmosphere. I was pulled in all directions and felt like I was spinning my wheels.

So when Lou Stables, CEO of Blanket America, told us that he was interested in building a new warehouse on adjoining property, we didn't let ourselves consider the possibility too seriously. Nearly a year passed before we went back to Lou requesting help in purchasing a "new to us" box truck for picking up food donations. Ours had become unreliable in picking up food from an average of nine sites per week, and the box truck fire was burning the hottest. Surely we could make \$10-15,000 work to purchase our next used box truck. While we awaited news on funding for the box truck, the grandson of our late neighbor, Mrs. Pauley, made us aware that the property would be coming up for sale. While we knew the space would enable lots of future growth, we were not sure how we might possibly be able to afford it while we were unable to even purchase the truck we so desperately needed. One year ago this month, there we were worrying and not letting ourselves believe in just how much our God could accomplish.

Just at that time, God was pulling off amazing things. Our friend and former clothes closet coordinator Louise Meck agreed to purchase the Pauley property next door and lease it to the Ministry Center to be used for missionary housing. The three bedroom home would be perfect for small teams or overflow lodging for large teams. The lot was large (more to mow!), but left plenty of space to expand in the very distant future should we ever need it. We occupied ourselves with the legal work of getting the house, until finally we got a call from Blanket America about the box truck.

Lou had spoken with one of his own donors on our behalf, and he stated that they wanted to help us to purchase a brand new box truck. In shock from the news, I was sure that I had misheard the rest of the conversation. He jokingly told us that the donation would, he believed, also be enough to build a new clothes closet. What?! In fact, the donation was designated to purchase a brand new box truck, secure an additional staff person, and build a new warehouse and clothes closet which just so happened to fit perfectly on the newly acquired property next to the office.

So many prayers have been answered through this donation, and things are happening beyond what we could have dreamed. All this orchestrated by God, placing amazing, kind-hearted volunteers at our center, and sending us the generous people at Blanket America with a vision for growth. For the past year, we've been blessed by individuals and businesses from the community that have donated their services to get the Pauley property and new clothes closet ready. We cannot thank them enough for their support, their hours of labor, and the material they put into these projects.

Still, it is so important that you know that it is your support, be it prayer, monetary, or in-kind donations, that keeps the Bland Ministry Center in operation. You feed the hungry and clothe the poor. You make it possible for the elderly to get in and out of their homes. You bring relief to their toothaches. You warm their homes during harsh winter months. You show the people of Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia the love of Jesus when you pray for our ministry or give a financial gift, no matter how large or small.

Because this is your Bland Ministry Center, we would like to invite you to visit our campus this October 7, from 2:00-5:00pm. All facilities will be open to tour, and our staff and regular volunteers will be happy to talk with you about just how much your support means to us. Grace Baptist Worship Team will perform, and light refreshments will be served. We look forward to seeing you there!

With love, Dee Dee Hoosier



For over twenty years, folks visiting the Center, whether receiving assistance or donating items, have commented how nice it is to see the same faces on every visit. Sadly, the first of September began without one of our most faithful volunteers. Vernie Simmons had been volunteering for almost 19 years. She began working with our food pantry registration after the death of her husband, Bennett Simmons. Vernie has been present during all of the changes and growth that we have been blessed with. She endured all these changes with a smile on her face and a prayer on her lips for our continued guidance and blessing from God. Vernie suffered a heart attack earlier this summer. After a week or two of recuperation she came back and continued to register our clients and pray with those who asked for her to remember them. Her chuckle and quick wit were only surpassed by her strong faith. We will miss Vernie terribly, but know that she has received full healing and is now keeping company with those who preceded her and she loved dearly.

Come see how your support
is growing a ministry and
serving others in need

OPEN HOUSE
BLAND
MINISTRY
CENTER

BLAND MINISTRY CENTER
AND
DENTAL CLINIC
SPONSORED BY
EAST RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION
&
THE BAPTIST GENERAL ASSOCIATION
OF VIRGINIA
A SOUTHERN BAPTIST MINISTRY

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 7
2-5PM

Enjoy refreshments and live music



**Bland
Ministry
Center**

FOOD PANTRY • CLOTHES CLOSET • DENTAL CLINIC • HOME REPAIR



We would love your help to set up our new mission house! We can use almost anything from towels to silverware, but check out our registry online for specific requests! Visit www.myregistry.com and search for "Bland Ministry Center" under the organization/nonprofit tab.

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

Adult underwear (new, in package)

Cleaning Supplies

New Christmas gifts for kids

Lowe's gift cards

Office Supplies (copy paper, blue/black ink pens)

PO Box 211, Bland, VA 24315 | (276)688-4701 | www.blandministrycenter.org | Facebook@blandministrycenter

The
Servant
Newsletter

PO Box 211
Bland, VA 24315