



# The Servant

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE BLAND MINISTRY CENTER

ANNUAL LETTER 2022

## Looking Back

In October, we submitted our Financial Year 22 Annual Report to our Board of Directors, but we're still reflecting on all of the highs and lows as we look forward to all that 2023 may hold for Bland Ministry Center. You can read the full report enclosed, but some highlights include:

- More food distributed than ever with the addition of several new partner pick-ups!
- Clothes closet items shared with our clients but also with churches and nonprofits responding to flood relief efforts in Appalachia.
- A strong partnership with local churches and businesses to host special events like school supply and Christmas distributions.
- The return of most of our mission teams after breaks due to the pandemic to complete 22 home repair projects.
- 11,181 hours of blood, sweat, and volunteers.

Of course, none of that could have been accomplished without you! We always know where to turn when we find ourselves in need of prayer or wise counsel as we move forward in our mission of meeting physical and spiritual needs of those in our surrounding communities. Regular donations from individuals, businesses, and churches, no matter the size, sustain the work we do throughout the year. We can't end the year without saying "Thank you," no matter how you show us support.

## Annual Report October 1, 2021-September 30, 2022

**OUR MISSION:** To meet the physical and spiritual needs of people in our surrounding communities.

**OUR VISION:** We imagine a prosperous Appalachia where no person hungers physically or spiritually.

We strive to be a missionary point of service for all Christians, Churches, and organizations by providing opportunities to fulfill Christ's Great Commission. We work with individuals and families. Children and the elderly. Those experiencing economic depression and those facing unforeseen life circumstances. We serve any person arriving in need.

The staff, volunteers, and supporters are called to live out Matthew 25:40, which states:

*“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’*

Here is how the Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers of Bland Ministry Center worked toward these objectives in our Year Ending Sept. 30, 2022:

2,934 Tuesday food boxes and 4,338 Thursday produce carts were distributed for families to prepare meals to their liking. Because we were able to accept bulk donations in our warehouse, we were also able to break down tractor trailer donations to share with other regional agencies, local churches, and flood recovery efforts in Kentucky and Virginia.

523,640 pounds of food was donated by Feeding America, Operation Blessing, Walmart, Sam's Club, and other partner agencies. 875 pallets of drinks were given in-kind from our local Gatorade plant, and another 96 pallets of fresh produce was made available thanks to a new relationship with Red Sun Farms in Dublin. The best part: what clients haven't been able to prepare immediately, many have preserved by canning and freezing.

5,676 pounds of clothes, in addition to loads of unweighed houseware items, were distributed to 1,142 families on Tuesday and Thursday distributions. Another 23 special loads were shared with community partners to benefit their clients- like diapers and wipes sent to flood victims in Hurley or feminine hygiene items shared with local high schools.

Between our Bland, Wytheville, and school-based dental clinics, we completed 3,361 appointments. Since the new VA Medicaid expansion offered full dental coverage for enrolled adults, we have had more new patient requests than we've been able to accommodate. We are in the process of hiring an additional dentist for the Wytheville office and raising funds for a new clinic in Bland so that we can hire even more providers to continue serving patients in Southwest Virginia. Our team takes emergency patients out of pain, but they don't stop there. They provide nutrition and hygiene counseling to improve patient health, and they restore smiles with treatment completion and even denture delivery when needed.

500 Christmas Meal Boxes were distributed, and 109 children opened pretty packages on Christmas morning to find fun new toys, cool new shoes, and other thoughtful gifts.

247 children came out to the Back to School Blessing cohosted by Bland County Ministerial Association where volunteers distributed backpacks, supplies, good food, and lots of love!

24 mission teams visited from across the state. Many of them worked around the office, but several completed community projects, including 17 accessibility projects, four home repairs, and a roof.

Between locals, mission team members, and Wytheville Community College service workers, our volunteers logged 11,181 hours.

In Fiscal Year 2022, these programs and projects were made possible because of support from individuals, businesses, and foundations as well as dental billing revenue.

- Wythe-Bland Foundation and Virginia Health Care Foundation provided grants to the dental program, including our Bland Clinic, Big Walker Dentistry, and the school-based program.
- A grant from Western Blue Ridge Baptist Network helped us break ground and start expanding our administrative office. We will add two new office spaces, a new reception area, and two public restrooms for volunteers and clients. They also funded warehouse equipment that made it easier to unload and weigh food donations.
- United Way of Southern West Virginia and Community Foundation of the New River Valley made benevolence funding available for emergency transportation, lodging, and utility bills in termination.
- BGAV funding was received through the Alma Hunt State Missions Offering for general operating expenses and World Hunger for food distribution.
- The County of Bland donated a used van that will be used in an upcoming food delivery program for local shut-ins.

Your financial contributions helped carry out programs and special projects all year. Whether you gave \$5,000 or \$5 or even 5 hours of your time... whether you sponsored our golf tournament, included us in your monthly giving, or penny-warred with your classmates, thank you for being a part of the incredible impact made on Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia.

We appreciate your continued involvement, investments, and prayers as we enter our 43<sup>rd</sup> year of meeting the physical and spiritual needs of those in our surrounding communities.

## What's Next

2023 will be our 43rd year of operation, and our 40th year of providing dental services. We really do have so much to celebrate! We are excited about working toward some much-needed expansions of services this year, and we certainly need your continued support!

The warehouse crew picks up more than 40 pallets of fresh food per week! In order to continue receiving this volume of donations, we will need to expand our warehouse. In a going-out-of-business sale, we purchased a walk-in cooler at a greatly reduced price. We will pour a 16x50 concrete pad and enclose it off the current warehouse. This will allow us to keep produce and meat fresh between our Tuesday and Thursday distributions.

Along with the need for increased food storage, we have launched a fundraiser to replace our decades-old forklift. When our current lift goes down for even a day, operations come to a halt. We are looking for a newer model, still gently used, that will have tires allowing for use on our gravel lot. Estimates are currently between \$18-25 thousand.

And finally, our most ambitious but needed project: the remodel of our original dental clinic. In 1983, volunteers remodeled a two-car garage and outfitted it with three dental operatories. While the clinic has served patients well for 40 years, plumbing and electrical are at capacity. New patient requests have soared, and the best way to meet demand is to add additional providers. There is no room in the current clinic for more staff, and the building will not support an expansion. We hope to break ground on a new clinic in the next two years.

The best ways to stay up to date on the happenings at Bland Ministry Center include:  
Following us on Facebook @blandministrycenter  
Subscribing to regular email newsletters (Send an email with subject line "Count Me In" to mbrowning@blandministrycenter.org)  
Giving us a call! We love to catch up with old friends.

Again, we want to thank you for coming alongside our staff and volunteers to meet the physical and spiritual needs of our clients in 2022. We hope you'll join us next year in our work of serving others in Jesus' name, whether you continue to pray, share our story with friends, or contribute financially.

Blessings to you and your family for a very Happy New Year!

