





## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to join communities, build and strengthen neighbor relations, and work side by side with residents to address community-wide concerns linking resources supportive of a healthy, safe and economically vibrant standard of living.

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy is to nurture inclusive communities, create support networks and determine the necessary strategic actions to address chronic, but preventable, problems.

## OUR PROGRAMS

Our programs partner with community-based efforts that identify and target the emergency needs of severely poverty-stricken families and individuals mostly in rural Appalachia. The basic needs of food, shoes and boots, winter coats, medical assistance, school supplies, household assistance, after-school program, summer camp educational enrichment and home rehabilitations are met for families, veterans, people with disabilities and elderly individuals who suffer from economic and physical hardship.



*School supplies distribution at Caring Hands Ministry Center in Gainesville, Georgia, 2014.*

*"You are saving and changing lives by making this help possible.  
Local emergency services says that a warm coat is all that kept a  
homeless lady from freezing to death.  
A coat you helped provide."*

*Mrs. Ann Fleming. Caring Hand Ministries Executive Director*

This year, we are celebrating 30 years of Americans Helping Americans® assisting our fellow citizens in need with the means to put food on the table, a roof over their heads, and a bright future to look forward to.

Americans Helping Americans® was the first project of Christian Relief Services founded in 1985 and was born out of the patriotic compassion for the families — particularly of Appalachia — who live in abject poverty in the richest nation on Earth.

During this past year, working with stellar partner organizations like Come-Unity Cooperative Care in London, Kentucky, in communities throughout Appalachia we have ensured that thousands of children, families, and senior citizens do not go to bed hungry.

When our staff visited War, West Virginia in the spring of 2014, we saw the impact of our partnership with Big Creek People in Action through our home rehabilitation programs. Seniors who otherwise could not enter or exit their homes without assistance now have handicap ramps constructed by volunteers with materials supplied by Americans Helping Americans®.

Throughout Appalachia, children participated in after-school and summer camp educational enrichment programs funded by Americans Helping Americans®.

In addition, thousands of children, families, and the elderly were able to brave the winter's chill with warm winter coats and blankets provided by Americans Helping Americans® to our partner organizations, as well as through our emergency utility assistance funding program so that those in need weren't forced with the terrible choice of putting food on the table, a roof over their head or electricity and heat for their home.

All of this is made possible through the support of our individual and institutional donors as well as those who participate in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) and numerous state employee charitable campaigns.

In the pages that follow in this year's Annual Report, you will read about the harsh conditions people face in the poorest communities of our country and the struggles they must overcome on a daily basis.

But you will also see how, through your compassion and generosity, Americans Helping Americans® has been able to create positive changes in the lives of so many, in so many ways, and give them hope for a brighter tomorrow.

On behalf of each child, each family, and each senior that we have been able to serve, I say "thank you."

And for the thousands more waiting — hoping and praying for "a hand up" in making their lives better — I hope you will continue to partner with us in this 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year to come.

God Bless America!



Eugene L. Krizek  
Col. USAF (Ret.)  
President and Spokesperson

The Appalachian region is home to 25 million people according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The region follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York State to Northern Mississippi and includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states — Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. It includes 420 counties and covers more than 205,000 square miles, or almost five percent of the nation's landmass. More than 40 percent of the region's population is rural, compared with 20 percent for the national population.

Appalachia's unique topography of rolling hills, deep valleys and ridgelines makes for some of the most beautiful landscapes in America. However, these mountains also create a barrier, isolating many rural Appalachian communities from job centers, schools and hospitals. And while two towns may only be 10 miles apart, it can take an hour or more to drive between them because of how the road must twist and turn to navigate around these scenic but obstructive features.

**In 2014, 90 out of the 420 Appalachian counties were considered “Distressed” by the Appalachian Regional Commission, and 108 more were considered**

**“At-risk.”** Distressed counties are the most economically depressed counties and they rank in the worst 10% of the nation's counties. At-risk counties are those at risk of becoming economically distressed and they rank between the worst 10% and 25% of the nation's counties.

**1 in 6 residents of Appalachia, including a large percentage of children, lives below the poverty line** (income below \$23,283 for a family of two adults and two children in 2012).

**The poorest counties of Ohio, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and Tennessee are all located in Appalachia.**

**In 16 counties in Appalachia, per capita income was less than \$15,000 for 2008-2012** (in adjusted 2012 dollars).

**Child poverty in the Appalachian region exceeded 23% for 2008–2012,** and the problem is even more acute in some parts of Appalachia.

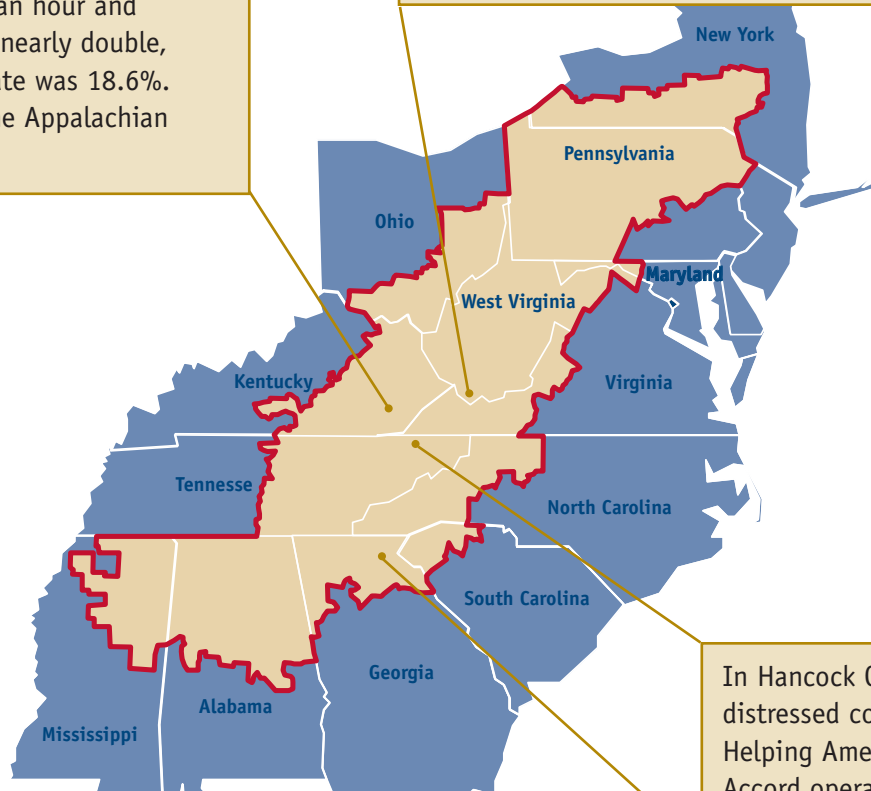
**In 123 counties, at least 30% of children under 18 lived below the poverty level,** more than half in the most isolated rural areas. Central Appalachia was home to nearly half of the counties with the highest rates.

In Lee County, Kentucky, a distressed county where Americans Helping Americans® partner Cumberland Mountain Outreach is located, the **per capita income for 2012 was \$13,114 and the poverty rate for 2008–2012 was 36.9%**. Lee County was listed in a 2014 New York Times article as one of the 10 “hardest” counties to live in in the nation.

In comparison, the per capita income in Lexington, Kentucky, just an hour and half from Lee County, was nearly double, at \$29,339. The poverty rate was 18.6%. Lexington is not part of the Appalachian region.

In McDowell County, West Virginia, a distressed county where Americans Helping Americans® partner Big Creek People in Action is located, the **per capita income for 2012 was \$16,352 and the poverty rate for 2008–2012 was 33.5%, the highest in the state.**

In comparison, the per capita income in Charlotte, North Carolina, about three hours from McDowell County, was nearly double, at \$31,653. The poverty rate was 16%. Charlotte is not part of the Appalachian region.



In Habersham County, Georgia, a distressed county where Americans Helping Americans® partner Caring Hands Ministries is located, the **per capita income for 2012 was \$19,758 and the poverty rate for 2008–2012 was 18.1%**.

In comparison, the per capita income in Atlanta, Georgia, just under two hours from Habersham County, was \$35,719. Atlanta is not part of the Appalachian region.

In Hancock County, Tennessee, a distressed county where Americans Helping Americans® partner Of One Accord operates, the **per capita income for 2012 was \$11,267 and the poverty rate for 2008–2012 was 32.7%, the highest in the state.**



### THE CHALLENGE

Appalachia is home to some of America's most beautiful landscapes, our nation's most tightly-knit communities and the deepest roots of American culture. Unfortunately, Appalachia is also a region with the challenge of longstanding poverty, too much dilapidated housing and thousands of children and senior citizens who lack access to nutritious food, adequate shelter and clothing, and medical care.



*Miss Mary, a resident in War, West Virginia and a beneficiary of Americans Helping Americans® home rehabilitation program, 2014.*

### THE HOPE

Since 1990, Americans Helping Americans® in Appalachia has worked with partnering agencies to help those living in Appalachian communities improve their quality of life. Our shared goal is to shape a new way of life for many of the residents of Appalachia — one in which families are able to meet their basic needs, where children succeed in school, and more citizens have the opportunity and support necessary to break the cycle of poverty.

Our Appalachian programs are a joint effort with established grassroots organizations in states including Georgia, Kentucky, West Virginia and Tennessee to provide families with the financial resources and contributions to fill the gaps.

Such collaborations include:

- Funding to pay for medical assistance such as eyeglasses and dentures;
- Emergency financial assistance for utility bills during times of hardship;
- Meals for school-aged children during the summer months when school is not in session and free or reduced lunch programs aren't available;
- Home rehabilitation for dilapidated, unsafe housing and handicap ramps for the elderly and disabled, many of whom are veterans, that would otherwise be unable to leave their home unassisted;
- Holistic family support to keep children healthy and in school; and
- Support for summer camp programs that provide nutritious meals, educational and fun activities, and safe havens for children during the school break.

These programs, as well as those of our partners across Appalachia, are succeeding in many communities because of the faith, generosity and commitment of our supporters. The good news is that the conditions in a large part of Appalachia are changing for the better as more generous Americans across the country become aware of the challenges that face this large region. Communities, and the groups that support them, are committing to making systematic changes, large and small, to improve the standard of living and the quality of life for the thousands that call Appalachia home. The number of Appalachian counties considered economically distressed was 223 in 1965, and today that number has dropped from 93 last year to 90 in 2014. (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2014).

## THE FUTURE

The future for this region shows promise and progress, but our work is far from done. Families are working harder than ever but many simply fall short as jobs disappear and opportunities dwindle. Our community partners receive thousands of requests for assistance annually for the most basic needs of food, clothing and shelter that continue to go unanswered due to a lack of local resources. In this often forgotten stretch of the country, Americans Helping Americans® is dedicated to assisting these hardworking, underprivileged people and helping the Appalachian region overcome the cycle of poverty, one family, one veteran, one child, one neighbor at a time.

**Americans Helping Americans® helped more than 15,000 children, families, and others throughout Appalachia.**

## Americans Helping Americans® Program Goals

- **Youth Programs** promoting learning, leadership and supporting overall well-being for children and youth from our nation's struggling communities.
- **Housing Rehabilitation Program** providing families and individuals with safe and stable housing.
- **Basic Needs Program** preventing crisis and maintaining stability for individuals and families with emergency assistance.
- **Veterans' Program** meeting veterans' essential needs for food, clothing and housing to honor their sacrifice and commitment to our country.



*Food distribution for our veterans in Gainesville, Georgia, 2014.*

The vast majority of Americans cannot imagine living in a house with a leaking roof, rotting floors, or no functioning bathroom or running water, but for many in Appalachia it's just a way of life. Many families, living in homes with drafty windows and leaking roofs, spend nights huddled together in one bed, simply for the warmth that they can provide each other. Many senior citizens are forced to become shut-ins due to the simple fact they can no longer enter or exit their house without assistance, but can't afford to have a handicap ramp built.

**Americans Helping Americans® provided financial support for the materials for 275 home rehabilitation projects with the work of more than 700 of our partner agency volunteers in West Virginia, Georgia, Tennessee, and Kentucky.**



*Before and after front porch rehab funded by Americans Helping Americans® in Jefferson City, Tennessee, 2014.*

*"This is the first time in many many years that I have not had to carry my wife to the car for her doctor's appointments. Thank you."*

Home rehabilitation recipient, Jefferson City, Tennessee, 2014





## Roofs, Ramps and Repairs — One Family's Story

In August, on a program visit through Kentucky, we met several recipients of our home repair program, specifically seniors who were already struggling with meeting daily needs. Certainly, for them, a dry and safe home did not need to be added to the list of daily worries. One remarkably cheerful woman we spoke to was Pammy, who shares a mobile home with her 89-year-old mother Eloise, on a rural Kentucky road.

Eloise was already having trouble getting in and out of the 30-year-old mobile home on her own when Pammy fell and broke her ankle, making it difficult not only to assist her mother, but even for her to get in and out of their home. This past summer, through our home rehabilitation partnership with locally-based charity, Come-Unity Cooperative Care, the mother and daughter have a new wheelchair ramp.

Both Eloise and Pammy were away when the volunteers came and in one week's time built a heavy-duty handicap ramp with a long gentle slope. Pammy had no idea what to expect when she returned home for the first time to see the completed ramp.

*"I was thrilled. I didn't know it could be like this here."*

"I was thrilled," she shared with us as she stood on the sturdy piece of craftsmanship. "I didn't know it would be like this here." And she is obviously grateful for the wheelchair ramp, but now she has an added concern — her leaking roof. On the roof of the mobile home is a large plastic tarp, held



*A new, functional ramp built for a Kentucky resident, 2014.*

in place with ropes tied to the wheelchair ramp and old tires on top to keep it from blowing in the wind. But it doesn't do much to keep the water out, as Pammy pointed to the waterlogged ceiling. "I know what I need to do," she said. "But I don't have the money."

So how does she try to hold it together? "I believe in duct tape." In the meantime, Pammy is hopeful there will be funding available soon to repair her leaking roof. Americans Helping Americans® will be there for Pammy and Eloise this coming year.

For many Appalachian parents who may not even have a high school diploma themselves, being able to support the educational efforts of their children can be a challenge. The summer months leave children with little or nothing to do and often too much unsupervised time. Our youth programs provide important summer enrichment experiences for children, keeping them active, healthy and safe during the summer. Our educational support offers academic assistance and brand new school supplies, giving children the support they need to be successful in school.



*School supplies distribution at Caring Hands Ministry Center in Gainesville, Georgia, 2014.*

- **522 school children attended summer camp programs offered by our partner organizations in Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia and West Virginia.**
- **215 individuals received life skills training and educational support in Tennessee.**
- **1,994 children were able to start the new school year with backpacks filled with all the necessary school supplies in Tennessee, Georgia, West Virginia, Virginia, Arkansas, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and North Carolina.**

*“Mom, can we keep reading books together at home like we read aloud at camp?”*

Caring Hands Ministry Summer Camp Attendee  
Cleveland, Georgia, 2014

It is not uncommon for children in Appalachia to show up for school in hand-me-downs that may even be a pair of their parents' wornout shoes, and several sizes too big. We have seen firsthand the sheer joy on the faces of children when they realize they can pick out their own pair of brand new shoes in a shoe store.

**2,044 pairs of shoes were distributed to children and adults including veterans in Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia and Ohio. In addition, 26 children benefited from the BareFeet program in Kentucky.**



*Barefeet program in London, Kentucky, 2014.*

## SAFE PLACES PROGRAM

Partnering with the National Alliance to End Homelessness and Fairfax County, Virginia, the Safe Places Program is taking a rapid rehousing approach to ending homelessness for domestic violence survivors in Northern Virginia. Rapid rehousing focuses on placing families back into permanent housing as quickly as possible in order to serve more families.

**14 families including 36 children were assisted in fleeing domestic violence through the Safe Places Residential Program and are building new lives for themselves.**



*Safe Places helps families fleeing domestic violence rebuild their lives.*



Without free- and reduced- breakfast and lunch programs at school, thousands of Appalachian children would be severely malnourished, literally on the brink of starvation. But what happens on weekends and when school is out for the summer? Our partner organizations provide backpacks of food for the children to take home on Friday afternoons to get them through the weekends. They also operate summer camps and summer feeding programs to ensure children get nutritious meals when school is not in session.

Americans Helping Americans® and our partners also help people stay warm in the winter by distributing winter coats and through our utility assistance programs.



*Dry food boxes for our veterans, 2014.*

- **More than 3,000 individuals benefited from food bank support in Tennessee.**
- **2,160 families received turkeys in Tennessee, Georgia, West Virginia, Virginia, Arkansas, Ohio and Kentucky.**
- **1,232 veterans and homeless families received dry food boxes in Georgia, Kentucky, Virginia and Maryland.**
- **More than 4,350 people, including infants and children, adults, seniors, and veterans, received winter coats, blankets, hygiene kits, laundry detergent, and diapers in Tennessee, Georgia, West Virginia, Virginia, Arkansas, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and North Carolina.**
- **254 families benefited from the utility assistance program in Georgia and Kentucky.**



## Brian's Story

*"We're going to be all right now. We're going to make it."*

Ann Fleming, executive director of Caring Hands Ministries, our partner in Cleveland, Georgia, told us she saved that text message from Brian, a Hall County daddy fighting a seemingly losing battle with cancer, "because it means so much to me."

Brian's wife is a waitress at a restaurant which is only open a few days a week in the winter, meaning the work is considered seasonal so she does not qualify for unemployment. They struggle to provide for their two pre-school aged sons.

Last winter, when the temperature dropped below zero there, Brian's neighbor called Caring Hands for help in obtaining an electric heater for them. Brian's family was out of propane, and didn't have the \$490 required for a minimum delivery.

Caring Hands sent a volunteer to check on them and found the situation even worse than described. They had received a power shut-off notice from the utility company and in a matter of days would have no electricity.

Brian needs oxygen to breathe and "no power would mean no oxygen," Fleming said. "That could have ended his life in hours."

But thanks to the generosity of Americans Helping Americans® supporters, what could have been tragic literally became life-saving.

*"We're going to be all right now. We're going to make it."*

"Because of Americans Helping Americans® we were able to pay that bill and keep his oxygen going," Fleming said. "Americans Helping Americans® had also sent us blankets and warm coats which meant the older boy could keep going to kindergarten without getting sick from the cold while waiting for his school bus."

"Grant money from Americans Helping Americans® had a ripple effect that went even further than the money itself," she told us. "One man said that if people who did not even know north Georgia could help out like that and literally save lives, surely people here could help too."

He told his friends and people at the businesses where he shops about the assistance provided to Caring Hands by Americans Helping Americans® and people started leaving money at a business collecting coat donations — some a dollar or two, others \$50 or even \$100.

Community leaders decided to hold a dinner to raise money. "The extreme cold coupled with the example from Americans Helping Americans® made a lot of people realize that there really was a crisis, and that crisis could be solved by people who care," she said. "This absolutely would not have happened if Americans Helping Americans® had not been a catalyst. Thank you and your donors. You have literally been life savers and helped rekindle the tradition of getting to know neighbors in need and reaching out to them."

And as for Brian, he is still fighting. "The doctors say there is no hope, but he says God is hope and what happened last winter when he prayed for his family to be warm shows him that God cares and uses people, which gave him the strength not to give up."

Donate online at [www.helpingamericans.org](http://www.helpingamericans.org)

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### Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) – #11962

Americans Helping Americans® is a proud participant in the CFC under the Charities Under 5% Overhead Federation. The CFC is the only authorized solicitation of federal employees in the workplace and we are required to apply annually. Charities that participate in the CFC must undergo an extensive review of financial and governance practices to be accepted in the campaign.

Americans Helping Americans® also participates in these state employee charitable campaigns — Arizona, California, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.



Families are grateful for Americans Helping Americans® and our supporters, 2014.

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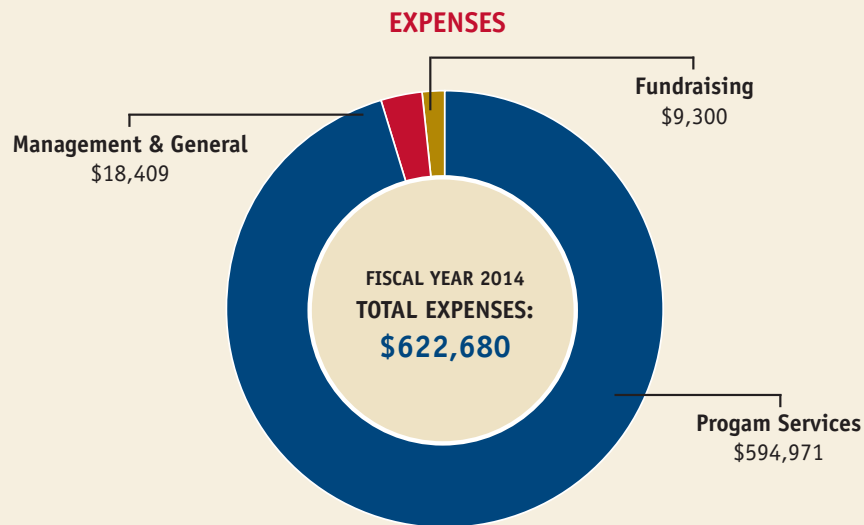
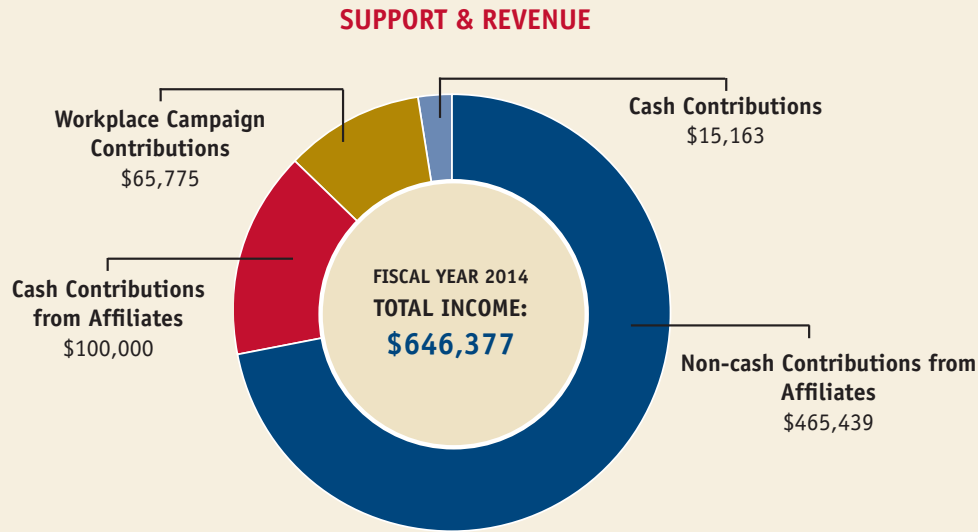


CHARITIES UNDER 5% Overhead

## Americans Helping Americans® 2014 Financial Summary

Year ended June 30, 2014

The financial results depicted here are derived from the Americans Helping Americans® June 30, 2014 financial statements, which contain an unmodified audit opinion. Our complete, audited financial statements can be obtained at [www.helpingamericans.org](http://www.helpingamericans.org) or by calling 1-888-242-5026 and requesting a copy.



***95.5% Of Total Expenses Go Towards Program Services!***



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