





### **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 and to link resources supportive of a healthy, safe and economically comparable standard of living.

### **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

Our Philosophy is to nurture inclusive communities, unite to 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 in rural Appalachia. The basic needs of food, shoes and boots, winter coats, medical assistance, school supplies, household assistance and home repairs are met for families, people with disabilities and elderly individuals who suffer due to economic and physical hardship. In addition, Americans Helping Americans® is dedicated to ensuring that children get off to the best start possible by supporting afterschool programs giving the opportunity for one-on-one tutoring and making sure they do not fall behind in their classwork. We also support summer camp programs where children are able to have fun while continuing to learn even when school is not in session. And because no child should go hungry during the summer when they don't

have access to free breakfasts and lunches, Americans Helping Americans® supports summer food programs which takes filling, nutritious lunches to children who otherwise would go without.



Mr. and Mrs. Trentham, home rehabilitation program beneficiaries-Cleveland, TN-2015











Basic Support



Afterschool



Vocational Training





### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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 in Appalachia – who live in abject poverty in the richest nation on Earth.

I will never forget my first visit to Appalachia and as I was being welcomed into a home, I was also warned to watch my step as the threadbare rug inside the house covered holes in the rotting floor. During my thirty-year career traveling the world with for the U.S. Department of State, I had seen people living in terrible conditions, but until that day when I saw it with my own eyes, I could not believe that in the United States in the 1980's there were our fellow citizens living in third world conditions.

But there it was, right in front of me. From that day forward I vowed to do what I could to ease the suffering of the poorest of the poor not knowing when their next meal would be, shivering in freezing weather with no heat or electricity, surviving in unsafe housing with leaking roofs and rotting floors porches and steps.

However, I wanted to do more than just provide a handout to ease their immediate crisis – that is simply a short-term solution to a long-term problem.

The long-term solution is a much more difficult task to accomplish, but as we have proven in three decades it is possible to break the generational cycle of poverty that traps so many in Appalachia and causes them to give up hope of ever making a better life for themselves and their families in the place they love and call home.

It begins with education. And it starts before the children ever enter the first grade. They must have opportunity to attend pre-school and learn their ABC's and 123's before ever walking into elementary school. It is during those earliest formative years they will absorb knowledge and acquire a life-long love of learning.

As they go through elementary school, these children need to be nurtured. Programs supported by Americans Helping Americans® offer one-on-one tutoring, to ensure they don't fall behind their classmates and ultimately, be passed up from grade to grade without mastering the subject matter.

For those who did fall behind, and give up and drop out, we support educational programs that, now that they have matured into young adults and realize the value of a high school diploma, help them earn a GED. We also support vocational-training programs for those with the desire to do more than simply "get a job," but build a career which will last them a lifetime.

Thirty years later, I look to the past in hindsight with the realization of this simple statement which has been the foundation of Americans Helping Americans® throughout our history – "We came together with a vision we wanted to share...and a mission to make it possible."

This annual report is a bittersweet one for me as it will be my last as President. I am so proud to look back at the accomplishments in this year's report – the thousands who have been helped in so many ways thanks to people like you – and I can rest assured that Americans Helping Americans® will be in the capable of hands of my two sons, CEO Bryan Krizek and General Counsel Paul Krizek.

As I recently told former long-time Board Member Marshall Mackler, "I know how proud you are to know that our organization is not hobbling into the future, but is still growing into the future with gusto.

"However, as I personally fade into the future, I pray that our vision for a better world and Americans Helping Americans® vital role in it continues to make a huge difference."

**God Bless America!** 

**Eugene L. Krizek** Col. USAF (Ret.)

President and Spokesperson

### **ABOUT APPALACHIA**

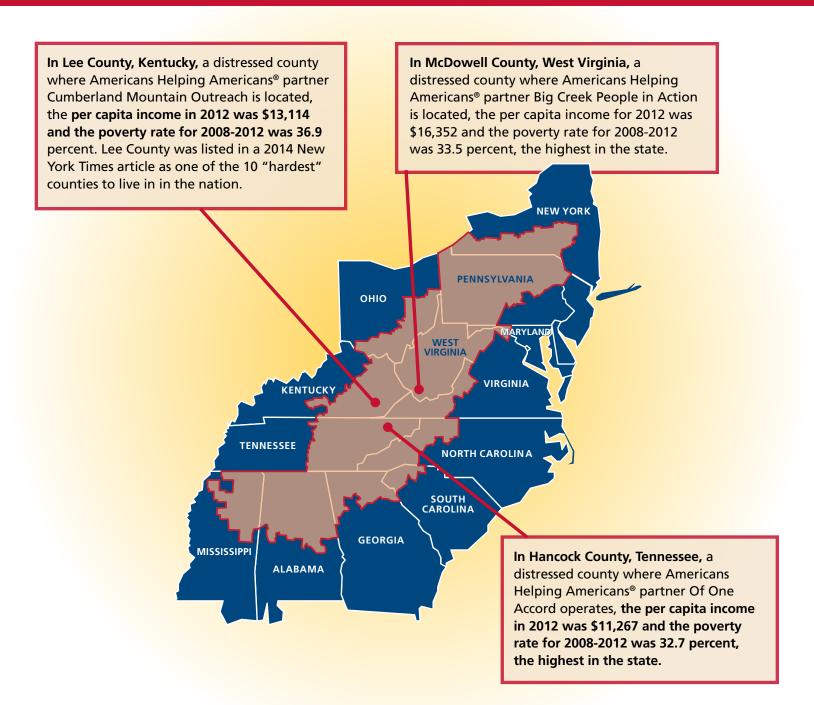
The Appalachian region is home to 25 million people according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The region follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York State to Northern Mississippi and includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. It includes 420 counties and covers more than 205,000 square miles, or almost 5 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. In 2015, 93 counties out of those 420 were considered "Distressed" by the Appalachian Regional Commission (up from 90 in 2014),

- Three of the counties in which Americans Helping Americans® works with partner organizations which are considered distressed are Lee County, Kentucky (Cumberland Mountain Outreach), Hancock County, Tennessee (Of One Accord), and McDowell County, Virginia (Big Creek People in Action).
- Another five counties where Americans Helping Americans® has partners are considered at-risk: Habersham and White counties in Georgia (Caring Hands Ministries), Laurel County, Kentucky (Come-Unity Cooperative Care); and Jefferson County, Tennessee (Appalachian Outreach).
- One in six residents of Appalachia, including a large percentage of children, live below the poverty line.
- 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 in 2008-2012 (in adjusted 2012 dollars).

and 110 were considered "At-Risk" (up from 108 in 2014). Distressed counties are the most economically depressed counties; they rank in the worst 10 percent of the nation's counties. At-risk counties are those at risk of becoming economically distressed; they rank between the worst 10 percent and 25 percent of the nation's counties.

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 ten miles apart, it can take an hour or more to drive between them because of how far the road twists and turns to navigate around these features.

- During the 2008-2012 period, about one is six Appalachian residents lived below the poverty level (income below \$23,283 for a family of two adults and two children in 2012).
- Child poverty in the Appalachian region exceeded 23 percent in 2008-2012, and the problem is even more acute in some parts of Appalachia. In 123 counties, at least 30 percent 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.
- About one in six Appalachian residents reported having a disability which is defined has having difficulty in at least one of six areas, hearing, vision, cognition, walking or climbing, self-care or attending to the functions of independent living in the period 2008-2012. Disability prevalence is particularly high in some parts of the region; the rate was more than 20 percent in 133 counties, nearly half of which were in Central Appalachia.



### WHAT WE DO

### The Challenge

**Appalachia is home** to some of America's most beautiful landscapes, tight-knit communities with deep roots but it is also a region plagued with longstanding poverty.

In many instances, the only thing of value a senior citizen owns is their home, but living on a meager fixed income means there is no money available for necessary home repairs such as fixing leaking roofs, rotting floors and porches or to construct a handicap ramp to enable them to enter and exit their home on their own.

Low-income children in a free- or reduced-price lunch program receive breakfast and lunch at school, but when school is out for the summer even if there is a free summer food program available, oftentimes it is not accessible for children who live miles away in a rural area.

Children whose parents are not well-educated, many having dropped out of high school long before graduation, frequently don't receive encouragement and support at home to do well in school themselves and end up dropping out just as their parents did.

Jobs are few and far between in many places in Appalachia and those that are available pay only minimum wage, not nearly enough for a breadwinner to support a family even working full-time.



A home scheduled for a rehab, Rogersville, TN-2014

### The Hope

Since 1990, Americans Helping Americans® in Appalachia has worked, in a cooperative, locally-focused way with partnering agencies to assist those residing in Appalachian communities improve the poverty-stricken reality of this region. 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 Appalachia programs work together with established grassroots organizations in states including Georgia, Kentucky, West Virginia and Tennessee to provide families with the financial resources and in-kind 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, who without which would be unable to leave their home unassisted.
- Holistic family support to keep children healthy and in school.
- Support for summer camp programs that provide nutritional meals, educational and fun activities, and safe havens for children during the school break.
- Supports educational programs for young students such as afterschool activities which include one-on-one tutoring so students who are having difficulty in the classroom receive the special attention they need to ensure they don't fall behind.

Supports vocational programs for young adults who may need remedial help in earning a GED and ultimately receiving training in order for them to start a career.

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 people across the country become aware of the challenges that face this large region. The number of Appalachian counties considered economically distressed was 223 in 1965, but today that number has increased from 90 last year to 93 this year. (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2015).

#### The Future

The future for this region shows promise and progress, but our work is far from done. 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 a lack of resources. Families are working harder than ever but many simply fall short as jobs disappear and opportunities dwindle. 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 at a time.

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 homeowners safe, stable housing including repairing roofs, floors and rotting porches and stairs, as well as constructing handicap ramps for the elderly and disabled so they may remain in their homes.

Basic Needs Program providing food, emergency utility payment assistance, winter coats, blankets and more in times of crisis and severe need.

Veterans' Program meeting veterans' essential needs for food, clothing and housing to honor their sacrifice and commitment to our country.

Educational Program provides extra support for younger children in afterschool and summer camp programs and vocational training for young adults offers the opportunity for them to earn a skilled trade and enter the workforce.



### HOME REHABILITATION PROGRAM



The vast majority of Americans cannot imagine living in a house with a leaking roof, rotting floors, or nonfunctioning bathroom or even 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.

# 2015 HOME REHABILITATION HIGHLIGHTS

- 187 individuals benefited from the home rehabilitation project in West Virginia.
- 13 home rehabilitation projects were completed in Georgia.
- 30 home rehabilitation projects were completed in Tennessee.
- 5 home rehabilitation projects were completed in Kentucky.

# Helping Elderly Homeowners to be Able to Remain in Their Home: "Priceless"

At Americans Helping Americans® among our longest lasting programs is working with partner organizations to help senior citizens be able to remain in the home they love and have lived in for decades.

For many in Appalachia, struggling to get by on a meager fixed income, it's hard enough to ensure there's enough money to put food on the table and keep the electricity and heat turned on.

Money for much-needed home repairs such as fixing leaky roofs, sagging floors and rotting porches and stairs is simply not there.

Americans Helping Americans® is proud to work with partners such as Ocoee Outreach in Cleveland, Tennessee, which operates a housing rehabilitation program for seniors such as Marsha.

As a team, Ocoee Outreach selects those in their community most in need of home repairs and organizes groups of volunteers to do the work. Americans Helping Americans® is there to provide the funding for lumber, shingles and other supplies required for the job.

Ocoee Outreach's theme in 2016 is "Restore – Renew – Reach" and is part of its mission of restoring homes, renewing hope and reaching hearts.

"Marsha's house was in a condition that she felt was impossible for her to do anything about," Ocoee Outreach recently reported to us. "The flooring in a couple of rooms, the roof, the back room/porch were all in desperate need of repair and restoration."

That was before a group from Oak Grove Baptist Church in Kingsport, Tennessee traveled nearly 200 miles to Cleveland to partner with Ocoee Outreach. "This group helped clean out rooms full of boxes and her things to prepare the way for new flooring to be installed that same week," Ocoee Outreach reported.

Due to allergies, Marsha was not able to remain in her house for the week while the work was being done, her sister, Bridgette, who also lives in the home, was able to stay and enjoy the whole process.

Marsha expressed her heartfelt gratitude all the work done to fix up her home, and, suffering from medical issues would have never been able to complete on her own.

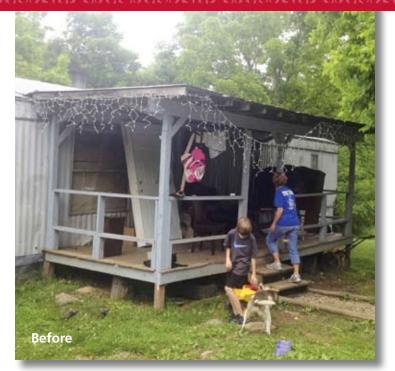
"Speaking of the work done on the house Bridgette was able to sum up in one word: "Priceless."

Thanks to a partnership between Americans Helping Americans® and Ocoee Outreach, Marsha's house now has a new coat of paint, a rebuilt and stained back porch, some new flooring in the living room and bedroom, and a new roof installed by

an Ocoee Outreach team a few weeks later.

Speaking of the work done on the house, Bridgette was able to sum it up in one word: "Priceless."

At Americans Helping Americans® we wholeheartedly agree – there is no price that can be put on making sure that an elderly homeowner can remain exactly where they want to be, in their own home.





Marshall house before and after funded by Americans Helping Americans® and volunteers from Oak Grove Baptist Church from Kings Port, TN rehabbed the home Cleveland, TN-2015

## YOUTH EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS





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 time unsupervised. 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, such as one-on-one after-school tutoring when school is in session, as well as a backpack full of school supplies at the start of the school year, giving children the support they need to be successful in school.

# 2015 YOUTH EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- 425 youth benefited from a summer enrichment camp in Georgia and Tennessee.
- 41 children attended an afterschool program and an additional 50 children attended a summer enrichment camp in West Virginia.
- 28 students benefited from after-school tutoring and homework help and 17 others benefited from a summer enrichment camp in Virginia.
- 30 students benefited from after-school tutoring in Arizona and also participated in a summer enrichment camp.



### BAREFEET AND SHOES PROGRAM



It's not uncommon in Appalachia for children to show up for school in hand-me-down shoes, worn out and several sizes too large. We have seen firsthand the sheer joy on the faces of the children who benefit from our Barefeet program when they realize they can pick out their very own pair of brand new shoes in a shoe store.

# 2015 BAREFEET AND SHOES HIGHLIGHTS

- 126 children benefited from the Barefeet program in Georgia and Kentucky.
- Thousands of children throughout Appalachia receive a pair of brand new shoes through the in-kind distribution of shoes by our partners.

"This was a very harsh winter for people across our nation this year and we struggled through some rough weather conditions here. To know that we were able to offer a warm coat to someone in need was especially gratifying during a winter such as this one."

Marsha Timpson, Co-Executive Director,
Big Creek People in Action in War, WV



# FOOD AND BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT PROGRAMS



Without free- and reduced-meal programs at school, thousands of children in Appalachia would be severely malnourished, literally on the brink of starvation.

But what happens on weekends and when school is out for the summer? Our partners operate summer camps when school is out providing children with a nutritious, filling meal they would not get a home. Our partner in Rogersville, Tennessee has even outfitted a used school bus into a rolling cafeteria that brings lunch to children on weekdays through the Summer Food Service Program.

In addition, Americans Helping Americans® and our partners help families and individuals stay warm during the cold winter months by providing winter coats and emergency utility assistance to those in need.



Summer food program in Rogersville, TN-2015

# 2015 FOOD AND BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- 2,267 individuals benefited from in-kind donations, including backpacks filled with school supplies, hygiene items, winter coats, shoes, diapers, and holiday food distribution in West Virginia.
- Over 400 individuals benefited from the utility assistance program in Georgia.
- 297 individuals were assisted with basic emergency financial support through a homeless prevention and home reestablishment program in Georgia.
- 4,755 individuals benefited from in-kind donations, including backpacks filled with school supplies, hygiene items, winter coats, shoes, summer food distribution for school children, holiday food distribution and veterans' food distribution in Georgia.
- 1,226 individuals benefited from in-kind donations, including hygiene items, winter coats, shoes, dry foods, blankets, and books in Kentucky and Ohio.
- 4,407 individuals benefited from in-kind donations, including hygiene items, winter coats, shoes, blankets, summer food distribution, dry food, and holiday food distribution in Georgia.

- 2,866 individuals benefited from in-kind donations, including backpacks filled with school supplies, hygiene items, winter coats, shoes, holiday food distribution, and summer food distribution in Tennessee.
- 7,328 students benefited from the summer food program in Tennessee
- 4,099 individuals benefited from food bank support in Tennessee.
- 80 individuals received full eye exams and prescription eyeglasses in Tennessee.
- 1,400 individuals benefited from in-kind donations, including backpacks filled with school supplies, books, hygiene items, winter coats, shoes, and holiday food distribution in Tennessee.
- 3,940 individuals benefited from in-kind donations, including backpacks filled with school supplies, books, hygiene items, turkeys, frozen foods, shoes, blankets, and winter coats in Kentucky.
- 2,750 individuals benefited from in-kind donations, including backpacks filled with school supplies, books, hygiene items, winter coats, holiday food distribution, and summer food distribution in Kentucky.
- More than 200 veterans benefited from monthly food distribution program in Virginia.

- 50 active-duty military and veterans' children benefited from donated backpacks and school supplies in Virginia.
- 470 individuals benefited from in-kind donations of winter coats, shoes, blankets and hygiene items in Virginia.
- 116 veterans received holiday food in Arizona.
- In addition, 200 children in Arkansas received backpacks filled with school supplies; 320 individuals benefited from winter coats, shoes and more in Mississippi; 74 homeless individuals benefited from in-kind donations such as dry foods, hygiene items and blankets in Maryland; 509 individuals benefited from school supplies and hygiene items in Alabama; 363 homeless individuals benefited from in-kind donations including winter coats, blankets and hygiene items in New York; 200 children benefited from backpacks will with school supplies in Pennsylvania; and more than 3,500 children benefited from children's books and teddy programs in New York.

### "You're making some little kid's day, I can tell you that."

 Danny, Salesman at the Shoe Inn Family Footwear Store in London, KY

# Americans Helping Americans® and Caring Hands Ministries: Keeping Little Jody's Belly Full

**Most everybody knows** you can't pour cement when the rain is pouring down. And when you can't pour footings, you can't build barns and chicken coups.

Two-year-old Jody is so hungry that he doesn't even have the energy to cry anymore.

Jody's daddy had been out of work for more than a week because of a spell of hard rains this summer in Cleveland, Georgia where Americans Helping Americans® partner Caring Hands Ministries is located.

Caring Hands Executive Director Ann Fleming recently reported that normally Jody's father earns enough to support his family...and even saves a little for emergencies. But this past summer was anything but normal.

For much of the summer the ground was so wet that he was working enough to just barely get by – then came a solid week of rain and saturated ground.

If things couldn't be any worse for Jody and his family, the other food programs in the area were all pretty much out of food.

When they arrived at Caring Hands, Jody had not eaten all day. His parents hadn't eaten in two days.

"Because you care and through Americans Helping Americans® there was enough food for them to get through a week, and there were diapers too," Ann said.

As for Jody's mother and father, "His mama looked as though she wanted to cry and his dad had tears in his eyes when Jody grabbed the breakfast cookies and wanted them right then."

Ann is predicting a hard winter for many in her community just like Jody's family, who weren't able to work because of the rainy weather during the summer. When they usually earn most of their money for the year.

She also reported that people who usually have shelves filled with canned fruits and vegetables from their own gardens to store for the winter have cupboards that are bare this fall, as a lot of gardens were flooded out this year.

For those working at the bottom of the pay scale already struggling to get by when work is plentiful, it's nearly impossible for them to manage when they're not.

Another issue Ann pointed out is the "trickle-up" effect it has had on the entire community when residents have no money to purchase items from store shelves.

"Local businesses are hurting and not giving to help the way they normally do," Ann lamented.

It is because of our generous and loyal supporters that we are able to provide emergency assistance to thousands of families just like Jody's in communities throughout Appalachia.

And to them, Ann had a message that we are proud to pass along.

"We are so grateful that because of your help we can count on Americans Helping Americans®. They always keep their word."



http://www.facebook.com/AmericansHelpingAmericans



http://www.twitter.com/HelpAmericans



http://www.youtube.com/helpingamericans1











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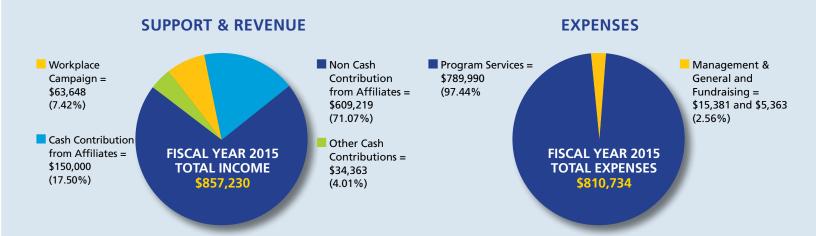
- Bryan L. Krizek, CEO
- Hon. Paul Krizek, Esq., General Counsel
- Nisha Singh, Secretary

#### **Executive Staff**

- Bethelhem H. Tessema, Interim Executive Director
- Bieu Do, Controller

#### **Financial Statement**

Statements of Activity-year ended June 30, 2015. The financial results depicted here are derived from the Americans Helping Americans® June 30, 2015 audited financial statements, which contain an unmodified audit opinion. Our complete audited financial statements can be obtained at www.helpingamericans.org by calling 1-888-242-5026 and requesting a copy.



97.4% of Total Expenses Go Towards Program Service!



8301 Richmond Highway, Suite 100, Alexandria, VA 22309 1-888-242-5026 info@helpingamericans.org www.helpingamericans.org

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"We deeply appreciate all the help that we receive from Americas Helping Americans. With the help that we have received, we feel we have been able to be of much more assistance to those we serve in our two counties".

Sheldon Livesay. Of One Accord

**Executive Director, TN** 

"Thank you so very much for the turkey. On my fixed income I was unable to buy a turkey. This will make me Thanksgiving complete. God Bless You" Treva Howell. Lee County, KY program beneficiaries

"When I looked at my home and all that needed to be done, and I wasn't able to do it, it made me feel sad and depressed. Now when I look at my home it makes me feel happy." A Home Repair beneficiary in

**Jefferson City, TN** 

Eyeglasses program in Hancock County, TN-2015

"Thank you to Americans Helping Americans for giving money to Community Cooperative Care (CCC) to fix my house. I'm just an old woman living by myself on social security. My roof was leaking, the door needed replacing, I couldn't use my bathtub, and I needed two new windows. CCC got the nicest people to come work all week at my place. I love it! I was so scared that I would have to leave my house, but it's going to be fine now."

A senior Home Repair beneficiary in London, KY