



# THE FRONT PORCH

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## 2015 Theme & Bible Verse

“Becoming:  
Walking like Christ”

*“Anyone who claims to be intimate with God ought to live the kind of life Jesus lived.”*

– 1 John 2:6

The central theme in this early part of 1 John is focused on knowing and abiding in God. If someone claims to have a close relationship with God, then that person ought to live according to the will of God.

Through the life and ministry of Jesus, we discover the will of God is to love God and love others. St. Athanasius wrote “we become what we know,” so the deeper we can know and love God, the more we will want to live a life like Jesus and become more like him. By looking at the life of Jesus, the way he interacted with and served others, we can follow his example and become more like him.

Through ASP, volunteers and supporters are given the opportunity to follow in the path of Christ by showing grace, listening to the call of God, and serving others out of love.

*While not everyone is able to come volunteer in Appalachia this summer, your support means everything. By helping families in need, you are following in Jesus’ footsteps – putting your faith into action. Thank you for all you do!*

## “I’ve Never Felt Blessed Like This Before”

You helped rescue a little boy with cancer – and his family!



*The Blair family will be getting a new home thanks to caring friends like you!*

No one should have to live in the kind of conditions the Blair family endured – but especially not a small child with cancer, fighting for his life.

ASP was called in to help this family last fall when a social worker from St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital expressed concern about their living conditions. What we found was truly alarming.

The windows and doors were broken, the floors rotted, and the underpinning that should have sealed the home – keeping cold and critters out – worn away. Danny and Lisa’s 14-year-old daughter refused to sleep in her room for fear of the rats and snakes that sometimes made their way inside.

Danny told us that in winter, the walls inside the home would ice over, leaving streaks of mold from the moisture come spring. The electricity only worked in half the trailer, and an old wood stove – both dangerous and dirty – was the only source of heat. The family’s boys – 18-year-old Brendan, born with severe mental disabilities, and 7-year-old John – slept on couches in the living room.

The state of the home was desperate enough to break anyone’s heart, but it was especially troubling considering

## Special \$25,000 Matching Gift

*Only if we can raise \$25,000 from friends like you by July 15<sup>th</sup> for summer needs now!*

Here’s a great opportunity to have your gift to ASP **DOUBLE** this summer. Your generosity today will be *stretched*, allowing us to say “YES” to more struggling families who need our help during these crucial summer months. But to secure this matching gift, we must hear back from you by **July 15<sup>th</sup>**. Will you please take action now?

Story continues on page 2

**“Blessed”** continued from cover page

John’s fragile state. This little boy was undergoing chemotherapy for cancer in his brain, and his immune system was so weakened that a cold could be fatal.

Thanks to friends like you, ASP rushed in to help – doing all we could to shore up the home before winter to keep John safe and well.

Your kindness, along with help from our volunteers, made it possible to seal up the windows and doors, patch the floors, replace the trailer’s underpinning, get the kids some



*The Blairs standing where their new home will be.*

warm clothes, and make sure the family had enough firewood.

It helped get the family through, but the truth was plain – the Blairs desperately needed a new home. So, with the help and determination of caring Christians like you, ASP broke ground on their new house this spring! John is a strong little boy, and he seems to be getting better by the day. He’s so excited for a new house, and he loves watching the builders work!

Danny and Lisa also have some special plans for their new home. Despite being together for over 20 years, they’ve never had a real wedding. So, that’s the plan for their new front porch – a wedding celebration to mark the start of their new life... in a new home, built with love thanks to you and other compassionate friends of ASP! **ASP**

*To receive updates of the Blair family and their new home, please fill out your email address on the back of the reply form in the gray box.*

## **SPRING BREAK 2015** *A break they won't forget!*



Volunteers from the University of Minnesota Wesley Foundation work on a bathroom addition for Goldie Evans. She lives in a storage barn that was converted to a one-person home in West Virginia.



Youth workers from Portsmouth Abbey School construct a porch for an elderly homeowner in Rose Hill, VA.



A college group from St. Joseph's University, work on a drainage ditch during a very rainy, muddy week.



A crew from Cary First United Methodist Church constructs a floor joist system for a room addition inside a barn being converted to a home for a family.

**568** volunteers

**43** Homes Repaired

**2** New Build Projects

# Walter's Corner

Dr. Walter Crouch, President & CEO



## *An Email and Urgent Plea from My Brother...*

This past winter was devastating to central Appalachian families living in poverty. In Tennessee alone, 21 people died of hypothermia, freezing to death in sub-zero temperatures. Eastern Kentucky, the epicenter of Appalachian poverty, established all-time snowfall and low temperature records. At one point, the snow was so heavy that the roof over the back porch of ASP's Guyan Valley Center in West Virginia collapsed under the weight!

The winter weather was particularly cruel to those living in substandard housing. With little or no insulation – roofs and walls easily penetrated by the cold air, and the lack of adequate and safe sources of heat – many central Appalachian families struggled to make it through the harsh winter.

In February, I received an email from my brother Mike, who had volunteered with our staff the week before in Virginia and Tennessee doing IHVs (Initial Home Visits). During these visits, our staff follows up on applications for help, inspecting homes to understand which ones qualify for repairs. Mike's email began with these words: *"I find myself tossing and turning at night over an IHV (Initial Home Visit) that I did in Hancock County (Tennessee). A family is living in a 20'x32' three room shack with no bathroom or kitchen. Their only source of water was a hose that was run across the ground from a neighbor's and it was frozen."*



*The Camdens' home*

Mike had visited the Camdens'\* home, a family of five living in what he would later describe as "a dilapidated small wooden weathered structure that you would expect to be abandoned or used for storage or a fruit stand in another location." Because the makeshift home was just as cold on the inside as it was on the outside, he found the family huddled together wearing winter coats indoors. After looking over the home, Mike concluded it was beyond repair and there was nothing ASP could do for this family. He had written on their application "NOT QUALIFIED" because the need was so excessive.

## **- NOT QUALIFIED -**

*pictures [of the house] later that I knew would confirm my analysis and show there was nothing in that structure worth saving. I was startled to see a large handmade cross nailed to the side of the house. If I had missed that sign of hope on my visit, what else had I missed? Although the need is probably far beyond what summer volunteers can repair, please revisit this family to see if there is anything ASP can do."*

My brother had experienced what our staff often experiences. Every year we have to say "no" to four out of every

Story continues on page 4

## “Spotlight” *continued from page 5*

figurative sense in the lives of everyone that has any sort of contact with the ministry. We are all just broken people in desperate need of each other, and most importantly, Jesus.

That is what wakes me up every morning even after long staff meetings... because He isn't finished with me yet, and He is far from finished with ASP. How incredibly blessed I am to be just one little nail in the grand scheme of the history of ASP. Every life is changed, even when it's unexpected. I just can't believe I get to experience these transformations not only in my own life, but also in everyone I encounter with each summer of service.

### **What is the number one reason you've decided to devote your summers in service to others?**

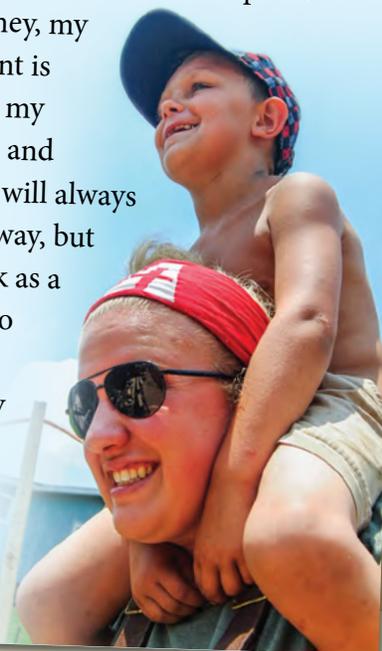
ASP, in my service as a volunteer and a staffer, has allowed God to reveal to me that I am created with

**“We are all just broken people in desperate need of each other, and most importantly, Jesus.”**

an intense passion for service and a genuine love for all people. ASP gave me a love I had never felt and a heartbeat into a life that was dying; God used every

aspect of this ministry to save me and to give me life with a whole new meaning. Every second that I can spend fulfilling the purpose for my life a little at a time, I am going to do. Right now, in this chapter of my journey, my fulfillment is found in my devotion and

service to ASP. ASP has and will always be a part of my life in some way, but continually being called back as a staffer is a pretty sweet way to fill my life's pages for the time being. I cannot honestly imagine spending every day of these five summers any other way, or in any other place. **ASP**



## Walter's Corner *continued from page 3*

five families who come to us for help. Often these families live in homes that are in such bad shape that they are beyond making any reasonable effort to repair. With limited resources, we select homes that we can afford to repair using volunteer labor within the time constraints of summer. The hardest thing we have to do is to tell a family in dire need that we cannot help. And we lose sleep over it.

Mike is my older brother and volunteers with ASP often. His request for us to revisit the Camdens' home will not go unheeded. He finished his email with these words, *“It suddenly dawned on me. I had missed the very obvious. There was something in that structure worth saving: There was a family, freezing, but filled with the warmth of love and hope.”*

Mike is right, in every home we visit, regardless of how costly the repairs, there is something worth saving: a family... moms and dads, sons and daughters, all given infinite worth by God. As ASP prepares for the work we will do this summer, will you help us so that we do not have to say “no” to another family?

No one should have to suffer through another winter in a home that badly needs adequate heat and substantial repairs. Every family is worth saving. **ASP**

*\*The family's name has been changed to protect their privacy.*

## SUMMER STAFFER SPOTLIGHT: Katie Jones, Returning Center Director



*Katie Jones will be heading to law school this fall. But before hitting the books, she has returned for her fifth summer on staff with ASP. Katie also served as an ASP volunteer for four years throughout high school with Jamestown United Methodist Church. Recently, we caught up*

*with this energetic 23-year-old to find out exactly what it is that keeps her coming back to these Appalachian mountains summer after summer.*

### **What is it about ASP's work/mission that made you want to get involved?**

Before losing myself and falling in love with the mountains and folks of Appalachia, ASP's philosophy coined by founder Tex Evans that "we accept people right where they are, just the way they are," really struck a chord within me. The fact that with every breath I take, I have an opportunity to love on and serve others just makes sense to me. Why would I want to spend my life any other way, doing anything else short of that? We all have a story, and I find that ASP is far from being just about leaving the comforts of your life to go fix someone else's. Rather it's about broken people venturing down switchbacks to find other broken people, and within a week's time and by the power of Jesus, filling each other's lives with love and hope and fortifying the purpose Christ has planned for us.

ASP is unlike any other service experience I have ever known. From the people, to the place in the heart of those mountains, to the ways in which God moves... it's one that can only be understood once you take that leap of faith and head to Appalachia to, as Gandhi says, "find yourself when you lose yourself in the service of others."

### **What are you most excited about this summer?**

As clichéd as it sounds... every single aspect of this job and the organization. Reconnecting with staffers that are more like brothers and sisters after a year apart, meeting the new families we will be working for, making memories and inside jokes with my staff, and developing life-long friendships with all of the volunteers that come to my county!

This summer is a milestone for me... my last official summer of being able to serve in the summer staffer role, so I just want to soak up every second the summer has to offer. The blessing ASP has been in my life abounds year after year as God puts a new focus to grow my heart and my character, and trusting Him. I cannot wait to see all the treasures He has in store for me, both through the challenges and the routine and everything in between. He has not failed me yet, and while emotions will also abound this summer, there is beauty in it all, without question.

### **Staffers work hard and the days are long. What makes it all worth it to you?**

**"I cannot wait to see all the treasures He has in store for me..."**

The undeniable fact that none of this could happen without the hand of Jesus. Think about it... logistically, ASP shouldn't work. You have college kids with a few weeks of construction training going out, living in rented schools, providing spiritual programming and managing construction projects in the midst of extreme poverty, with hundreds of volunteers at all different levels of experience and from all walks of life... all, while on a tight budget. Yet, ASP DOES work, and it's changing lives every single day; an eternal transformation that ripples and affects so many people.

The mountains of Appalachia are being moved both in the literal sense in regards to poverty and in the

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## Constructing Hope on a Campus Near You!



ASP's new initiative, College Service Project, is off to a great start. College Service Project (CSP) seeks to inspire students to lives of Christian service through home repair in Central Appalachia and in their home community.

framework and guidance necessary to recruit, fundraise on their own, and do home repair for low-income families in their community.

As of this spring, there are now seven official CSP Chapters: Virginia Tech, University of Wisconsin, UNC Wilmington, Appalachian State University, Union College (KY), North Carolina State University, and UMass-Amherst. Not only will these chapters help families in their area, they will take trips to serve at one of ASP's four year round centers.

For the last 45 years, ASP has been using the passion and energy of college-aged students to run its summer youth program, and CSP is a way for students to bring the spirit of ASP back to their college or university to get more students involved in service and continue making homes warmer, safer, and drier.

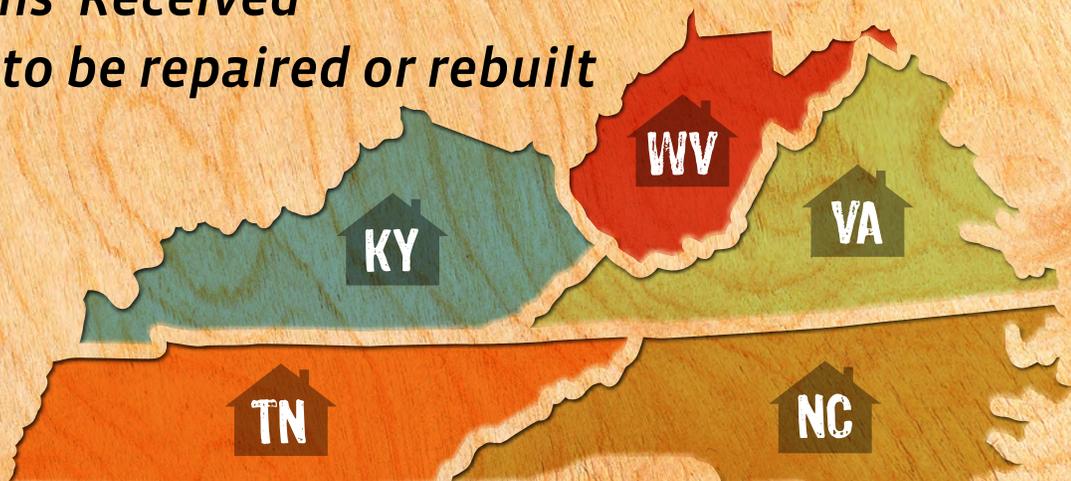
In this effort, students will launch campus organizations, or "chapters" of College Service Project through their institution. ASP will then provide the



If you would like more information on College Service Project, please e-mail Margie White at [MWhite@ASPHome.org](mailto:MWhite@ASPHome.org). You can also support the program by encouraging any college students you know to pursue launching a chapter, or purchasing one of our new CSP t-shirts, available at [ASPstore.org](http://ASPstore.org).

## SUMMER 2015 *At a Glance...*

**4,670 Applications Received**  
**500 Homes to be repaired or rebuilt**



*Your generosity makes it all possible!*