

1993

2018

25 years in service

January-April 2018

IT'S THAT TIME OF THE YEAR!!!

much wished Christmas boxes. They feel the warmth and love of the hands and hearts of the people in the far North Carolina who bought the nice gifts and packed in those boxes to send to them... Invisible strings connecting hearts thousands of miles away are becoming tangible through the boxes of LOVE - through the Christmas Boxes. These



Christmas time is here again followed by the joy and excitement of the Holy Season!!! Again hundreds of children are at the AGAPE Center, children who couldn't sleep all night knowing that next day they would get so much dreamed Christmas Boxes full of joy and surprise!!!

It's a real celebration of Christmas, with laughter, songs and dances. The children are smiling and happy ... happy to celebrate and happy to get so

kids do not have much to be happy about, but ... they have YOU-ANGELS who care about them and do so much to make the Holy Season happy - to give them joy!
THANK YOU!!!

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GOALS OF PROJECT AGAPE

- Develop humanitarian and benevolent activities
- Provide housing and livelihood through partnership with Fuller Center for Housing & Heifer International
- Develop intentional spiritual partnership with those who travel to Armenia
- Stand with Armenian people in their service to God;
 - a. Through partnering with:
 - AGAPE hospital
 - AGAPE Children's Home
 - AGAPE Christian Education Center
 - b. Through partnering with: local Armenian community
 - c. Through partnering with Armenian Apostolic Church

FEBRUARY - WAREHOUSE FLOORING CONTINUES



Keeping the warehouse of Project AGAPE in Berdzor in good condition has always been priority, as it's very important to keep the goods in a clean and nice environment in order to distribute those to families. Operating the distribution from the warehouse the AGAPE staff is aware through many years of experience how much impact the importance of the warehouse have on serving the families in need effectively and efficiently during the distribution and having all the construction tools, equipment and other supporting supplies in good order to get what's needed in the known place and in time. Getting the warehouse repaired and cleaned is very advantageous for the mentioned above purposes, but it requires funds and consumes time, which are both limited. But throughout the years AGAPE staff has done its best to always have a clean and repaired as much as the limited funds allowed warehouse.



The warehouse flooring construction was a time and efforts consuming work that took about three months - December, January and February. It was not an easy issue to build a flooring in two big sections and the distribution room of the warehouse using pieces of basalt and mixing huge amounts of concrete to level the uneven floor of the warehouse. It took longer also because of the distribution of the Christmas boxes, as the construction work was done so that not to prevent the distribution of the Christmas boxes because thousands of children in about 100 villages were looking forward to getting those. Two different projects had to be done during the same period of time and in the same place and the experienced staff of Project AGAPE managed doing it so that none of the projects failed because of the other.



The second section of the warehouse has 5 small cells each of them serving as a storage place for different supplies to be available any time when people come to ask for needed items. One of the cells serves as a storage room for the construction tools and supplies used when volunteer teams come to renovate family houses. All the boxes, tools and items in the cells were completely removed to open the floors and to make it possible for the mason to build the new and nice flooring. When the flooring of the cells was completed, the boxes, tools and items were moved back to the cells to start the renovation of the main part of the warehouse. Many volunteers especially those who were beneficiaries of the House Renovation Project helped the staff both in this difficult task and in distribution of the Christmas Boxes.



The outside door was changed and both sections of the warehouse were separated from the distribution room in the middle of those sections with doors to make it possible to heat that room and the main section of the warehouse during the winter time. The heating system had been installed before starting the flooring construction. The half-wall between the distribution room and the main section was built up to the ceiling for the same - heating purpose.



This was an auxiliary but important project to support the main and the most important purpose of serving the people well, serving so that any item given to them to help does not become a source of infection, disease and troubles because of the warehouse it's kept in.

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TWO CONTAINERS WITH CHRISTMAS BOXES RECEIVED IN MARCH

In the first half of 2017 Project AGAPE received two containers - both from North Carolina Conference. Two 40' containers had 5300 Christmas Boxes which arrived just in time to continue the distribution of the Christmas Boxes in the rest of the communities of Kashatagh region.

Besides the Christmas Boxes there were bedding, clothing and accessories, household supplies, health and hygiene supplies, school kits, sewing supplies in the containers, and there were also 2 pallet jacks and a truck camper shell for the Ford, which was bought and sent to Project AGAPE by Allan Van Meter - the chairperson of Project AGAPE to replace the old worn out camper shell and which was bigger to provide more space to carry more Christmas Boxes when traveling to the villages.

You may recall an article in the 2017 updates talking about the difficulties related to loading and unloading the boxes shipped in the containers. The 2 pallet jacks were sent to make the work of the AGAPE staff easier. Besides that, a member of Myers Park UMC Dennis Savell donated \$700 to help with the purchase of a truck pallet lift.

The Christmas



Boxes shipped by the North Carolina Conference usually come in big boxes which fit about 72 or 73 Christmas Boxes. Two people in the truck slide the box down a ramp and then it takes at least 4 people in Berdzor warehouse to place the big box on a small hand truck, move it into the warehouse and then lift it up and place on the top of another box like that. It's good that there are always volunteers helping when the containers are unloaded in Berdzor warehouse. Just a call and there are more people to help than needed.

The small hand truck that Wanda Watts sent in 2016, is the most convenient thing that helps the staff a lot to move the boxes from place to place: as a reward for that it got the old license tag of the Dodge!

Most of the Christmas Boxes from the two shipments were delivered to the children in 100 villages of Kashatagh region, the leftover boxes were saved along with the Christmas Boxes sent later from the Western North Carolina Conference to be delivered to the kids of Berdzor during the next Holy Season. The big

boxes are stored and reused, as they are great to store the Christmas boxes and to be used during the distribution for sorting the Christmas Boxes by sex and age. When you exactly know where to find boxes of certain age groups, it makes the work quick, much effective and efficient, especially knowing that there are at least hundred people waiting in the cold to get so much dreamed Christmas Boxes.



The old license tag of the Dodge



FEBRUARY-MARCH-APRIL: STILL DELIVERING THE CBS



2018 was the fourth year when Project AGAPE received enough Christmas Boxes to deliver to all the children of Kashatagh region. This is the most wished gift that the children of the area are looking forward to receive. And this is the only distribution when parents are encouraged to take their children with them when coming to the AGAPE Center to get the Christmas Boxes. Most of the parents do not bring their children with them, but there are many who come with their kids or grandkids.



The process continues until March, but this year with several projects going on and the shipments arrived in March it continued until April.



This grandmother is happy as she is taking Christmas boxes to her 5 grandkids who missed getting those in 2016, 2017 & now - in 2018.

One should see the shining eyes of the children when the most desirable boxes of joy come out of the warehouse and their excitement grows when they see their names written on the boxes. While writing the ages of the kids to look for the Christmas boxes sorted by age and sex in the warehouse big boxes the AGAPE staff members write the name of the kid on their list instead of writing down whether it's a boy or a girl and after choosing the appropriate box they immediately write down the name of the kid on the lead and the kids like seeing their names on the boxes. After doing this once the AGAPE staff members realized how much the kids liked this and they continued working the same way. Of course, this can be done while delivering the Christmas Boxes to the children of the villages, as during the Christmas event for Berdzor children the things are so hectic that the time and the circumstances will not allow doing that.



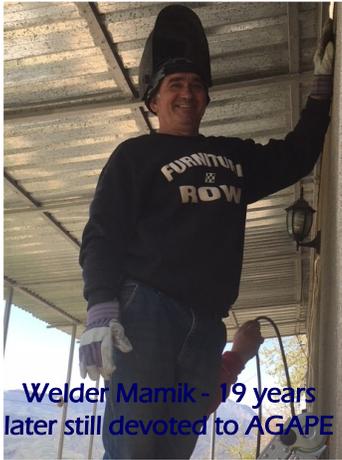
In 2018, again, those kids who missed a box in 2015, 2016 or 2017 for any reason received extra boxes to cover the years they had missed, as the data base kept for each year immediately shows whether any of the children missed their Christmas box. The 3739 Christmas boxes sent by Western North Carolina Conference and stored for the Christmas along with 5300 Christmas Boxes received from the North Carolina Conference in two 40' foot containers were enough to not only provide the kids with 2018 Christmas boxes, but also to recover the missed by the kids Christmas boxes in the previous three years. 7,680 Christmas boxes were delivered to the children of Kashatagh region during the Holy Season of 2018. For the third time since 2016 the Christmas boxes were enough to meet the request of an NGO operating in Yerevan which was started by a woman who had lost her son in the war. The name of the NGO is "Don't mark me absent" and it seeks ways to help the families who have lost fathers, brothers and sons in the Karabagh war and in the last 24 years while protecting the borders of Armenia and Artsakh. 135 kids from families supported by that NGO received Christmas boxes.



The number of the Christmas Boxes mentioned above is not complete as the distribution of the Christmas Boxes continues all year round for the newborns: as soon as the child is born, the parents come to get "Infant to 2 years" Christmas Boxes full of supplies they need to care for the newborn child. Usually they get more than 1 - mostly 3 or 5 Christmas boxes depending on the quantity available, as for them this is not a Christmas gift, but a gift from God ... first necessity supplies without which it would be impossible or very hard for them to care about their newborn child. It's obvious how important the Christmas boxes are for every child in the region - for those who cannot afford getting a Christmas gift and those who cannot afford buying very expensive and sometimes just unavailable in the region supplies to care for infants. **THANK YOU!!!**



APRIL - CEC GAS LINE CONSTRUCTION, CONTINUED RENOVATION & AGAPE CENTER PAVEMENT



Welder Mamik - 19 years later still devoted to AGAPE

April was another busy month for the AGAPE Staff. Along with the continued distribution of the Christmas Boxes in the marginal communities of the region, the AGAPE staff was involved in several other projects: constructing a gas line for the Christian Education Center to install a heating system there, paving the AGAPE Center using the same technique - mosaic flooring made of basalt and concrete, continuing the renovation of the Christian Education Center started by the team from Myers Park UMC in August of 2017 and renovating the sewing room of the Christian Education Center and the distribution room in the warehouse. Besides that the AGAPE staff prepared to host a building team from North Carolina Conference in May the goal of which was to renovate a family house in Berdzor.

There were 4 different masters working on those projects - a welder, 2 masons and a plasterer. There were workers from the community hired to help the masters and earn for living to help their families, and the AGAPE staff helped the masters as much as it was possible.

Amazingly, the welder building the gas line was Mamik - the same person who helped the building team from WNCC in 1999 to build the first playground in Berdzor adjacent to the Christian Education Center.

It was possible to implement all these projects thanks to the funding received from both North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences. The Myers Park UMC had a big input in those.

THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO, for the happy smiles on children's faces when getting the Christmas Boxes, for the nice rooms built for them to learn different skills at the Christian Education Center, for the work people can do being hired thanks to the funding you provide to earn their daily bread with dignity, for making this place where the traces of war are still obvious better and the environment these children live nicer and safer.

THANK YOU AGAIN & AGAIN!!!

