

### Neighbors Helping Neighbors since 1987

Aid to Distressed Families of Appalachian Counties Post Office Box 5953 • Oak Ridge, TN 37831-5953 (mail) 1051 Oak Ridge Turnpike • Oak Ridge, TN 37830 (offices) (865) 425-0256 • www.adfac.org

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**HOLIDAY EDITION • DECEMBER 2020** 

## Our Stories: Coping in the age of COVID

THE NEWSLETTER OF AID TO DISTRESSED FAMILIES OF APPALACHIAN COUNTIES

Cara, single mom to three, strives to provide her children a stable, loving home. Her situation is unfortunately one we see too often: she receives no child support and the father does not make much effort to have a relationship with them, let alone provide care. With no other family nearby, Cara does not have a great support system, but is dedicated to raising her family the best she can

Earlier this year, she secured a decent factory job, earning just enough to cover

their necessities. Just two weeks into her new job, the factory closed as a direct result of COVID-19. It remains closed.

While remaining hopeful the factory would reopen, Cara searched for new employment, finally accepting a

low-wage cashier position. She now earns just over \$300 a week to support her family of four. With the only other resource being \$330 a month in SNAP (food stamp) benefits, Cara's wages simply were not enough to maintain the most basic of household expenses.

It is both unthinkable and easy to imagine the difficult decisions Cara faced. Which month should she pay rent, and which month electricity? SNAP benefits do not last all month, so if she paid both rent and utilities, how would she and her children eat? What if her kids needed clothing, or medication? Should she risk driving uninsured to make sure the water bill gets paid?

When Cara reached out to ADFAC for help, it was the first time she had ever requested our assistance. She was struggling to catch up on back rent and was also in arrears on provided 459 (and counting!)
assistance actions for
households that have been
directly impacted by
COVID-19. Like Cara, many lost
their jobs and now work for
lower wages. Others still have
their pre-COVID

Cara was incredibly grateful

and relieved for the much-

needed financial aid. The

short-term assistance also

seek higher-paying

provided stability for Cara to

employment, which she hoped

to secure before the holidays.

Since spring, ADFAC has

jobs but are working fewer hours. Some have not been able to find employment at all. It is truly a stressful, challenging time for working-class families; many financially established households are

also experiencing hardship.

From the very beginning of the pandemic, we have been impressed and heartened by the swift and generous response of our community. On behalf of Cara, her children, and all the other families we have been able to assist, *thank you*.



her electric and water accounts. During her phone interview, ADFAC's social worker could sense she was uncomfortable asking for help but could also tell Cara's priority was caring for her children. Thanks to grants received to help families affected by COVID-19, we were able to help with rent, electric, and fully pay Cara's water bill.

# 4,131 disadvantaged students receive backpacks and supplies

Good news is something we all need! Despite the challenges of operating during a pandemic, ADFAC's School Supplies Program was able to serve 4,131 preK-12 students in 2020! Challenges remain for 2021, but for today, we acknowledge the accomplishment and the difference it made for thousands of local students.



"Coming back to school was a source of worry/anxiety for many families after the COVID closure. Many are struggling financially. This provided some normalcy and excitement about the reopening of school."

LeighAnn Bonesteel, Principal

"Each student brought their backpacks to school the first day of class and had their materials organized and ready for class. Students were proud of their materials and showed their pride by participating in class." - Roya Mitchell, Guidance Counselor



"That just lifted a weight off my shoulders!" -Sunbright Parent



"Students feel like they are on a level playing field with their peers when it comes to their backpack and supplies. We guide them through selecting what they need, but they love getting to choose. We love seeing that smile on their face." - Renee Braham, Principal



"I love my unicorn backpack. How did you know unicorns were my favorite?" - delighted Kindergartener

### COVID-19 assistance partners

Altrusa • City of Oak Ridge • COR Electric Department • Clinton Utilities Board • CNS Y-12
East Tennessee Foundation Neighbor to Neighbor Disaster Relief Fund • Elks Spotlight Grant
Rotary Club of Oak Ridge Sunset • Sew Good Mask Project • TN Community CARES
Tennessee Valley Authority • United Way Anderson County
UT-Battelle ORNL Community Recovery Campaign
Individuals who donated their COVID-19 Stimulus Payment or made other contributions

## 2020 Annual Meeting

ADFAC's Annual Meeting was held via Zoom on Monday, September 21. ADFAC was very pleased to welcome three new board members: Lissie Meza Beehan, Katy Brown, and Lynnteasa Mitchell.

Emily Mitchell, Tom Row, and Marcus Weseman completed their board terms and will be missed! We are grateful for their many contributions to ADFAC during their time as board members.

#### We present the 2020-21 Board of Directors:

George Paynter, President • Tom Marshall, Vice-President
Dave Mullins, Treasurer • Sasha Benjamin, Secretary

Wendie Aurin	Cathy Goodman	Gene Patterson
Lissie Meza Beehan	Margaret Goodman	Darren Osborne
Chris Black	Brad Jones	Cande Seay
Katy Brown	David Lovett	Phil Yager
Jo Bruce	Lynnteasa Mitchell	
Jim Dodson	Faye Orick	

Board members serve on at least two committees, including Executive, By-Laws, Human Resources, Finance, Nominating, Development & Public Relations, Strategic Planning, Hospitality, Household Assistance Program, School Supplies, and Appalachian Housing Partners.

Also during the Annual Meeting, ADFAC staff surprised volunteer Margaret Goodman by presenting her with the 2020 Liz Herbes Silent Hero Award. While Margaret participated in the Zoom meeting, Connie Ball and Janice Morin sneaked to her house to (socially distanced, of course) deliver the award!

Margaret is not only a board member, but a dedicated Household Assistance Program office volunteer. Her volunteer spirit has definitely been essential, especially during the pandemic. Thank you, Margaret, and congratulations!



### Farewell to a special fundraiser

As we approach the end of 2020, we extend a warm thank you to all of the restaurants, sponsors, media outlets, volunteers, and diners for helping make Dine & Donate a success for ADFAC and our clients. As with many great things, some find their way to an end and that is the case with this long-running fundraiser. The final Dine & Donate occured on Monday, December 14, at Burchfield's, Hoskins, Mediterranean Delight, Razzleberry's, the Soup Kitchen, and five locallyowned Subways. Each of these restaurants participated in the fundraiser for more than a decade!

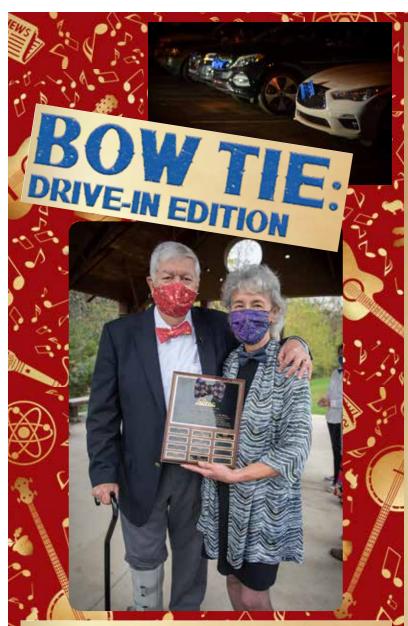


Over the years, Dine & Donate (along with its predecessor Feed the Need) raised over \$94,000. A total of 35 restaurants and 14 sponsors participated, along with thousands of customers. It was a great run, and though we are sad it has come to an end, we are so grateful for the support, enthusiasm and partnership in our community.

We hope you will continue the tradition of visiting these fantastic restaurants. Now more than ever, our local eateries need support, and there are great contact-free ways to enjoy a good meal and help the local economy.

Finally, hats off to the extraordinary Cande Seay. She has given countless hours delivering posters, sending cards, doing TV interviews, visiting restaurants and soliciting sponsors. Dine & Donate and the funds raised for ADFAC through the years is a testament to her commitment to our mission.





# Bow Tie 2020: quite possibly the best socially-distanced event of the year!

On Saturday, Nov. 14, more than 130 friends and supporters gathered (safely, in their own vehicles!) to celebrate Tom Beehan as the 2020 recipient of ADFAC's Bill Wilcox Bow Tie Award. Great food, great music, great friends, and goatbells! Following the Drive-In, even more folks joined us for the virtual party. When all was said and done, thousands of dollars were raised to support ADFAC's work.

In the midst of a difficult year, it was especially meaningful to be able to gather in this way. It wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and creativity of the Bow Tie committee. Through many Zoom meetings, emails, and phone calls, the Bow Tie crew truly went above and beyond. Thank you, team, and congratulations, Tom!



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### 2020 ADFAC SUPPORTERS

WOW! Your generosity continues to amaze us, and YOU make it possible for ADFAC to help thousands of our less-fortunate neighbors! We are happy to share our 2020 donors (donations received from 1/1/20 through 12/14/20).

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provides an option for monthly giving, or reach out to your financial institution for info.



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Help ADFAC reach its 2020 fundraising goal by making a year-end donation! Your support matters.

"Gift of Hope"

This holiday Just in time for the holidays, ADFAC offers a way to honor your loved ones and help the season, give the poorest families in our community.

> Simply make a donation of any amount to ADFAC and let us know who your donation

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If you would like to honor someone special with the gift of hope, please fill out the form at right and send it to ADFAC (feel free to duplicate the form as

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You may also order cards through



Our PayPal donation link is in the right sidebar of the main page. Please make sure you list all information (recipient's name & address and your contact information) in the "Add special instructions

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our website at www.adfac.org.



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