

# CAP Connection

A newsletter for volunteer alumni of the Christian Appalachian Project

Winter 2008



Christian  
Appalachian  
Project

## Independent living option expands CAP's volunteer opportunities

When Randy and Rita Beckham talked about the possibility of retiring early, Rita asked, "What are we going to do? We can't just sit in the house and look at each other?"

Rita had worked as a legal secretary; Randy was retiring as CEO of Traditional Bank. They had raised two children, lived in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky and began to discuss the possibility of doing some sort of mission work. That's when Rita suggested they look into volunteering with CAP. She knew of the organization from her father's many years on CAP's board and thought it would be a good idea to serve relatively close to home.

A quick look at the CAP web site, though, prompted the couple to question if CAP was the right organization for them. The site mentioned community living, and as empty nesters who were used to peace, quiet and going their own way, community living didn't sound like something they wanted to try. When they learned indepen-



Randy and Rita Beckham

dent living was also a possibility, the Beckhams decided that was the way to go.

CAP has had a number of "unofficial" independent living volunteers throughout the years, primarily couples or retirees who found their own place to live while serving. Independent living is now a formal option and an increasing number of people are choosing it.

C.C. Crozier had been donating to CAP for a few years when she received a CAP calendar at her Florida home. As someone who long had a heart to give, she felt that God was calling her to move to Kentucky and volunteer with CAP.

C.C. didn't fully understand how the volunteer arrangements worked and she assumed she would need her own place. Working on that assumption, she bought a townhouse in Paintsville in November 2005, moved to town then began volunteering in the elderly program in March 2006.

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Sister Margot Eder (right), CAP volunteer, provided a Rockcastle County family with food from the new pantry.

## First food pantry opens

On December 4, 2007 The Grateful Bread Food Pantry opened in Mt. Vernon as CAP's newest project. "It's really, truly something CAP has never done before," says program manager Peggy Hancock. Part of the reason the time seemed right for a food pantry was that CAP has

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## Alumni Highlight: Keith Gilbertson

### Employee recognizes value of saving hearts and hope

It was supposed to be a few months of doing volunteer service, but for **Keith Gilbertson** it became a lifelong vocation.

Keith first arrived in Kentucky from Minnesota in February, 1983. He was assigned to be a "generalist," serving in everything from garden seeds to emergency assistance and Christmas baskets.

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## Alumni Highlight: Keith Gilbertson Employee recognizes value of saving hearts and hope

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Keith decided to stay longer than those few months and ended up volunteering for a year and a half. During that time, he met **Mary Kay Wright, '83 - '84**, who became his wife. Mary Kay went to work in the special needs program and Keith became program manager with small farms and Christmas baskets.

As he moved through different aspects of CAP's programming, Keith says, "I've probably been visiting in thousands of homes in a 10-county area." One of the things he learned is that it's important to people to feel that someone cares about them. For the first eight years of his time with CAP, Keith says, he

wasn't doing work that would save someone's life; it was work that would help people feel good and get them through hard times. He found great importance in the actions because, he says, "We're doing it to save their hearts and hope."

Keith eventually began working in adult education, something he does believe can transform a person's life. As he looks at the photos above his desk of some of his early students, he says, "Those are the kind of people I'm working for now." He can also pull out a stack of books, created through an online program, that his students have written. Having the publication in their own hands, Keith says, helps them feel

proud of their accomplishments.

Because of his long service in the region, Keith sometimes sees former students in the community.

He recently encountered someone who had been working as a janitor when he first enrolled in class but now has a better job. The man told Keith: "I've come up in the world. Thank you."

Keith blends technology and teaching and sometimes finds himself making a difference in the lives of his older students. One woman who is in her seventies has learned to use a variety of programs and do things like making slide shows. The computer work has improved her dexterity. She told him, "You're helping me live longer."

After many years and even more students, Keith seems content to be part of the fabric of CAP. He says service work isn't always easy, but he's stayed with it because, "It seems like the right thing to do."

Keith and Mary Kay live in Berea with their youngest son, a senior in high school, and they are looking forward to their twins graduating from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2008.



*Matthew, Mary Kay, Keith, Eric and Jacob Gilbertson.*

## Learn about volunteer transitions

*We asked **Stacie West, '03- '04**, National Program Director at the Pallotti Center in Washington, D.C. to share her thoughts about transitioning from volunteer life in this and upcoming issues of the CAP Connection.*

Life is full of transitions and the transition from volunteering at CAP to moving on – whether to a new city, to your hometown, or to a new role within the CAP community – shares much in common with other transitions we make in life. Often, the unique intensity of the volunteer experience can make the transition difficult. Friends and family may not understand what life was like for you in Appalachia; finding a supportive community may prove to be a challenge; and sometimes

you may feel like running back to CAP and your volunteer community.

From my own transition, and from listening to other former volunteers, I've found one way of taking forth our unique experiences. I've learned that it's important to flesh out the overarching themes, lessons and values we encountered during our volunteer time. Much of what you cherish about your experience at CAP may stem from things that cannot be replicated, like the people you lived with, your participants, and the time of your life during which you served. You can get deeper insight out of your time at CAP by reflecting on the broader ideas of service, spirituality, and community, and how their meanings have changed for you.

 From Across the Mountains

**Jean (Kalata) Koppen, '92 – '93**, recently celebrated her one year wedding anniversary with husband Chris. Chris works as a healthcare center lobbyist and Jean does research for the American Association of Retired Persons. They live in Alexandria, Virginia.



*Chris and Jean Kalata*

**Katie (Gisch) Ogilvie, '96 – '98**, enjoys being a stay-at-home Mom in Chicago. She and husband Don welcomed their first baby, Madeline Grace, into the world in November, 2006.

**Clair (Kaiser) Kinkaid, '96 – '98**, and husband Richie welcomed a new daughter, Susan Elizabeth, on October 17, 2007, weighing in at six pounds and 12 ounces. She joins older sister Anna Lee in the Kinkaid family.

**Kim (Otto), '96 – '98**, married Mike Kennedy



*Several CAP friends joined Kim Otto for her wedding in October. The group included: Julie (Otto) Schmitz '96-'97, Steve and Linda Klos '98-'00 with Joseph and Brenna Klos, Kim (Otto) and Mike Kennedy, Megan Goonan, Debbie Goonan '91-'93, Erica Witmer (Group vol. in '07). Not pictured: Kathleen Leavell '76-'78 and Kathy Kluesener '73-'80.*



*The 1998 – 99 Rockcastle House reunited for the eighth time in October, 2007. The group camped out at Breaks Interstate Park with six of their original seven volunteers. Deb (Hasselbring) Gottfried wasn't able to participate this year because of her new baby, Ani. Those present included: Ann (Sandhoff) and Kevin Black, Angie Carter, Jim and Rachel Steingass, Beth and Dan Chauncy and family.*

in Virginia Beach, Virginia on October 20. The couple honeymooned in Hawaii and is now living in Virginia Beach.

**Christine (Penne), '99 – '01**, married Brian Schmidtke on July 8, 2006 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Steve Laudenslager, '98 – '00, joined the wedding party for the rehearsal and dinner then donated his services as honorary photographer the day of. "It was wonderful," Christine wrote. "My husband Brian works full time in human services at a residential care facility and will start his masters next spring in mental health counseling. I'm still also working in human services with disabled children. I went back to school for medical assisting a year ago and have another year until graduation."

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CAP wants to hear from you. Send us a photo of yourself during your volunteer time and a current photo, along with an update of what you're doing. We'll share it with your volunteer friends in an upcoming issue of the CAP Connection.

## Independent Living Option

*Continued from cover*

"All of my life this is what I've done," C.C. says, referring to how she would often drive an older person from her church to the doctor or help them with another need. Now she's doing that in a region she has been fascinated with since childhood. C.C. first served in Johnson County, then Magoffin County, and is beginning to serve in Lawrence County.

"You spend your days making friends," she says. "Who would have thought you could spend your last days on earth doing something you love?"

The 71-year-old C.C. also enjoys her relationship with the Johnson Volunteer House community, which is five minutes from where she lives. "It is like having my grandchildren and children nearby," she says. When her family came to visit, the volunteers included them in community activities.

Crozier also likes being part of the local community, which she thinks happens more

readily for independent living volunteers than those living in community. Martha and Larry Cowles agree with that assessment. "We're very conscious of being CAP people when we're in the community," Larry says, noting that it's a good way for the local people to learn about CAP.

The Cowles arrived in September 2006 when they ventured out from their Massachusetts home to visit CAP. They were retiring, selling their house and getting rid of many of their accumulated belongings, but they still couldn't fathom living in one room in a volunteer house. So they initially moved into a trailer and joined the Rockcastle volunteers for meals and prayer a couple of nights a week. Larry and Martha agree the benefit of that experience was that they built close friendships and found mutual support.

The Cowles volunteer at

Healing Rain, CAP's residential treatment center for women with substance abuse problems. The couple bought a home and



*Larry and Martha Cowles*

began spending less time at the volunteer house, but they find their relationship and their service at Healing Rain feed their spirituality. "We're very attached

to our program. It's a very spiritual environment. Miracles happen there every day," Larry says.

Larry feels he and Martha are representative of their generation as people who have children and grandchildren and want to meet their family obligations but also want to contribute something significant to society. "We gave up a lot and we gained a lot," Larry says.

"I think having the option (of independent living) is important so each individual can consider what best suits their lifestyle," Martha says. "You can very much become a member of the volunteer community while still living independently."

Rita and Randy Beckham enjoyed their association with the Magoffin volunteer community. "I think it's essential to have that relationship with them for faith sharing and to experience the lives they are living and what they are giving up to be there. It's essential," Rita says.

So as CAP continues to offer more volunteer options than in years past, the face of the volunteer population is changing to include more couples and retirees. Living in your own home and still serving, Crozier says, is magnificent. "It is a wonderful way to live and serve CAP."

### Send us your news, message, memories or prayer requests

Your former volunteer friends want to know what you're doing these days! Please send us any news you would like to share. We'll publish your news in an upcoming edition of the CAP Connection. Send to: Kathy Kluesener, Volunteer Program, 4192 North Wilderness Rd., Mt. Vernon, KY 40456 or [volunteer@chrisapp.org](mailto:volunteer@chrisapp.org).

Name:

Street address: City: State: Zip:

Phone:

E-mail: Years you volunteered:

Your message, news and prayer requests:

## First food pantry opens

*Continued from cover*

seen more needs among lower middle class people who didn't previously need assistance. Peggy attributes that to the economy.

The first three days the food pantry was opened confirmed the needs as 70 families showed up for food. The pantry is open three days a week while the other two days are used for restocking. On those days, families in need can visit a local church that also has a food pantry.

CAP is working with God's Pantry Food Bank in Lexington to replenish the food. The program also received its first volunteer donation in December -- a truckload of food from St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati.

## New respite center progressing in Hagerhill

"It's been a dream of the staff and former volunteers," Program Manager Teresa Gullett says about the construction of a respite center in CAP's Hagerhill complex (Johnson County). Many who have served at Rainbow Respite in Mt. Vernon have longed for such a program in the farther eastern Kentucky



*Volunteers were instrumental in building the new respite center in Hagerhill.*

## March 30, 2008 is Summer Camp Sunday!

CAP needs your help to make this summer at Camp A.J. and Camp Shawnee the best ever! To help us recruit this year, we are asking CAP alumni to mobilize and spread the word about CAP's need for summer camp volunteers at their local churches. We've designated March 30 as Summer Camp Sunday and we need alumni across the country to help us make this a successful recruiting event. You can help in one of three ways:

- 1) Give a brief talk at the service
- 2) Set up a table and make an announcement about the information available
- 3) Submit an announcement for your bulletin.

You make the arrangements, and we will send you all the information you need, including a bulletin announcement or sample talk. If that day is not the best, we encourage you to participate on a different day.

To sign up for Summer Camp Sunday, contact Amy Schill at 1-800-755-5322 or [aschill@chrisapp.org](mailto:aschill@chrisapp.org) by Friday, February 22. Thank you in advance!

counties. So in the summer of 2007, volunteers and employees undertook a building blitz to begin construction. Teresa hopes the program will open in April or May of 2008.

The new respite center will have two wings and a dual purpose. Teresa says one wing will serve the elderly with a day program and the other wing will serve those with disabilities. Teresa hopes the center will be able to meet the needs of both groups by organizing activities in which they will work together. She believes the older adults can be instrumental in helping the participants with disabilities to increase their life skills.

Teresa has already received inquiries about the center from a number of Eastern Kentucky counties and West Virginia.

## Corporate Caring Partners reaches businesses

In March, 2007, CAP began a new sort of outreach -- this one

to corporations that might want to support the organization through cash or in-kind gifts.

Randy Beckham began the Corporate Caring Partners initiative during his volunteer tenure. As a former bank CEO, Randy knew how to work with the business community to create a "partnership" with CAP that would benefit everyone. So far, he has brought in approximately 20 partners.

One example of this initiative at work is the new respite center that is being built in Johnson County. Randy says Interstate Natural Gas Company provided people-power as well as fuel to help raise the new building. That's an in-kind gift of approximately \$25,000.

In return for participating with CAP, corporations have their names listed on the organization's web site and CAP will make available for them employee weekend volunteer opportunities.



Judy Begley

## Two Great Ladies from the manager

By Kathleen Leavell



Cecelia Williams

There is a beautiful expression often heard among the older people here when someone dies. They say: "She passed." As a former teacher, this phrase calls to mind words like "succeeded" and "graduated." It evokes a sense of pride in the individual who "made it."

It is in that spirit that I share with you the passing of **Judy Begley, '71**, and **Cecelia Williams, '79 - '84**, two of CAP's most beloved volunteers, both of whom raised the bar in servitude.

It was Cecilia who, in her 70's showed us what real hard work was. I know many of us remember resting on a box in the warehouse, wiping the sweat

off our brow, and watching her whisk past us carrying a box of canned goods. We'd hustle back to work and think, "Well I guess I'm not that tired after all."

And it was in Judy's presence that we knew we were appreciated. Whether eating ice cream in their living room, or working late at Camp Cliffview, when we were with Bill and Judy, we knew what an honor it was to be a volunteer.

They made us want to work hard and they helped us see the value of what we did. They were deeply loved and will be dearly remembered.

And that makes us feel proud to say, "Congratulations, Judy and Cecelia. You passed!"

## Welcome New Alums

Please join us in giving thanks for the following new alums who have left their unique reflection of God's presence in Appalachia.

Stella Ostrander	Leanne Hall
Kay and Neil Hall	Kristian Groves
Sandy Ainsworth	Kathryn Blaney
Heather Ganz	Betty Malloy
Kevin DeMaria	Mark Wilson
Danielle Brandt	Gerald Ray
Audrey Gilhooly	Anna Cain
Nancy Curci	
Randy and Rita Beckham	
David and Gloria Lieb	
Karen and David Ewert	
Paul and Marcella Bennett	

## In the spirit of thanksgiving

Thank you to everyone who has assisted our traveling volunteer recruiters, Amy Schill and Amblynn Allen, during the past few months. We especially want to thank:

**Jennifer Luoma '06-'07**  
**Kathy Webb summers '04 and '05**  
**Stephanie Linder '05-'06**  
**Katie Klister '03-'04**  
**Christina Laurence, '04-'05**

CAP Connection is published quarterly by the CAP Volunteer Program. If you have news to share or story ideas to suggest, please send them to one of the following:

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