

The Father Beiting Appalachian Mission Center

THE APPALACHIAN SPIRIT



Edition 43 SPRING



An Outreach Ministry of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lexington

VOLUNTEER SEASON 2021

Volunteer season in 2021 hopefully will look a little different than 2020.... Here at FBAMC, we are planning on moving forward with our volunteer season but our work projects will be completed in a safe, socially-distanced manner. Our outreach team has been evaluating home repair jobs for the spring/summer and we have several potential OUTSIDE jobs that are on our list to be completed.

If you are with a group that has decided that this spring/summer is too soon to plan a mission trip, we want to offer the opportunity for you to come and visit us in the fall and/or winter when we may be able to do INSIDE projects again! In the past, our volunteer season has normally ended around the first week of August with one or two groups attending in October. In the past, we normally requested that your group stay for an entire week to receive the full experience of working at the Mission. However, Covid-19 has shown us that we can do things in a different manner and still achieve some great results.

Beginning this fall, we are welcoming any groups that would like to come in the fall and/or winter for a long weekend (or a full week if you prefer) work trip. We know that many colleges have had to postpone spring break mission trips due to the changes in their school semester. Maybe an alternative FALL BREAK trip may be just what they need! We also know that many of you who work or have kids still in school come during the summer during your vacation but if you think you could get away for a 3-4 day long weekend, we will gladly accommodate your schedule.

If you have any questions, please send me a message at volunteers@fbamc-ky.org!

VOLUNTEER SEASON 2021 BEGINS

During the last week of January, Father Beiting Appalachian Mission Center was blessed to host a wonderful group of college students from Stevens Institute of Technology from the Newark, NJ area. These gifted and talented students helped us kickoff our 2021 volunteer season. They were a very energetic, mechanically skilled, and impressive group of young people. This earlier than usual January visit happened because of a quirk in the students' spring semester schedule and worked well for all.

As a result of this "alternative spring break," we at FBAMC were able to begin a much needed and long overdue upgrade to our lower volunteer quarters. Due to January weather limitations, we focused on inside projects. At our lower living quarters, we pulled up old carpet and replaced it with new laminate wood flooring.

OUR MISSION

The Father Beiting Appalachian Mission Center is an outreach ministry of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lexington serving the needs of the Appalachian region of Eastern Kentucky.

We will walk together in the Kingdom of God as a holy presence that impacts a community in need with spiritual and material support.

Through face to face interactions, home repairs and safety needs, and programs for the youth and elderly we bring the presence of God and reach out to those in need.

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The students also repaired walls, flooring, and ceilings throughout and removed and replaced damaged sheetrock in a bedroom. This much needed attention began our efforts to improve our housing for our spring and summer volunteer groups. Future volunteer groups along with mission center staff plan to continue these efforts. Interior painting, new roof and gutters, and a general facelift and other improvements are happening and will hopefully be completed by late spring and the summer volunteer season. We at FBAMC thank the Stevens Institute of Technology group for helping us get a good start on this initiative.



Stevens Institute of Technology hard at work



BRINKER'S CLOSET

As many of you know, when we downsized the Mission Center a few years ago we needed to also downsize some of the outreach programs that were provided to the community. One of those outreach programs was assistance to families and individuals impacted by fires and other disasters. When a family loses their home in a disaster, the expenses to replace the necessary items to run a household can be overwhelming, especially if that family is struggling financially before the disaster.

The start up of Brinker's Closet is one way that the FBAMC can help make the recovery after a disaster a little easier for those families. Our goal is to be able to provide basic items such as toiletries, personal hygiene items, towels, washcloths, bed linens, pillows, underwear and socks, basic cooking utensils, and other essential household items to a family. Our "off-season" has been spent remodeling the Brinker building so that it can be better utilized as a storage space for these items as they are donated to us for distribution to the underprivileged and most needy.



CHRISTMAS DISTRIBUTION EXPANDS INTO MARTIN COUNTY

Father Beiting had a deep love of Martin County and it always held a special place in his heart. This year the FBAMC staff wanted to continue his legacy in that county by expanding our Christmas gift distribution into their school system. In the past, we have concentrated on the Lawrence County school system as well as some local organizations, but we felt the need to reach out to the Martin Co School system to see if they would be open to our help.

Because of YOU, we were able to provide gifts for 204 Angel Tree students in 5 different Martin County schools from elementary through high school. The family resource center personnel were thrilled with the gifts and wanted to make sure that we thanked YOU, the donors, for helping their most needy children.

Through your donations of gifts and money, we were able to provide Christmas gifts, coats, socks, and gloves for a total of 662 children. This included Angel Tree students in 10 schools, a local women's/children's shelter, a church, and a fire department that has a large giveaway. One burn out client who lost her home just a couple of months earlier was provided Christmas gifts of her children.

None of the schools or organizations were able to have their normal Christmas “parties” but they organized drive-through events that made the gift giveaways special for the children. It is amazing how many people came together to make our kids Christmas a little brighter... YOU with your donations, FBAMC staff organizing the donations and our wonderful community folks who always have the kids in the forefront. Thanks to YOU from the FBAMC staff and from our local community organizers for all that YOU did for the kids this Christmas!



THE ICE STORM OF 2021

The ice and snow event that hit Texas in February was broadcast over all the news media sites for many days. Most people do not realize that, here in Eastern Kentucky, we were hit with three similar ice and snow events in one week that devastated our communities.

Here in Lawrence County, where FBAMC is located, 98% of our homes were without electricity for many days. While some of the luckier ones were without electricity for just 3-4 days in freezing temperatures, a large portion of our homes were without power for over 2 weeks and some may be out for well over 3 weeks.

When you live in our type of terrain, the lack of electricity from downed power lines is not the only issue that families have. Families and individuals could not even get out to the main roads without using chain saws to cut through the trees that blocked driveways and access roads. If you have ever volunteered here, you know that many of our families live on roads in remote places without neighbors. Most of our population had no electricity, no way to heat their homes, no water (due to loss of electricity at the pump stations) and loss of all perishable food. Generators were hard to find IF you had the money to even purchase one.

But our little community came together as we usually do when our neighbors are in need. Once the electricity was on in certain parts of the town, warming centers/shelters were set up through the cooperation of different churches, Red Cross, and local government agencies. Food was provided for not only the folks who were without power but also for the linemen crews who traveled so many hours to come in here to help in this disaster.

These centers were used by some of the most vulnerable in our community including many elderly and handicapped individuals, because it was easier for them to function there than at home by themselves. While we had no deaths in Lawrence County due to the storm, two deaths were reported in one of our neighboring counties.

The FBAMC wanted to become part of the recovery process for the folks in the shelters. Because of your generous donations, we were able to do that. We supplied toiletry items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, washcloths, etc. from our newly established Brinker's Closet as well as \$25/\$50 Wal-Mart gift cards to help the families replace some of the food that they lost during the storm.

The recovery process for our community is JUST beginning. FBAMC will be working with other agencies and groups to find ways that we can assist in this process over the coming weeks. Again, without your generous donations, we would not be here to help when our community needs us!



Wish List

- Box Truck
- Small Generator
- Push Mower
- Chain Saw

We would like to thank Father Tom, the Rose's, and the gentleman from Dell for helping us get the computers we needed. We are all set with the computers we need. We would also like to thank all the organizations and families that donated and helped with our Christmas distribution. It was a big success. We also deeply appreciate all the donations of clothing, personal items along with all of the monetary donations. We have so many caring people that believe in FBAMC and in keeping Father Beiting's legacy alive.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS!



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I often read through past letters of Father Beiting to his Kin Folks (donors). There are so many, I do not know if I have shared them with you or not. Many of our donors have said that reading Father's stories is a favorite part of the newsletter. I hope you see the goodness and love Father Beiting had in heart as you read them. He was a remarkable priest that loved to help the less fortunate. If we all could have a heart like he had this world would be a much better place.

A SHED, A 40-YEAR-OLD LADY, AND A BLANKET

"Three weeks ago, one of my volunteers took me to see a lady who had no hope. She was living in a shell of a building. It had no heat, water, or electricity. She had started to try and build her a house. She got what lumber she could and did the work herself.

When the volunteer and I knocked on the makeshift door, she asked who it was. The volunteer said, "It's Father Beiting". The door opened. What a sight! Everything she could gather up was piled everywhere. She had a pile of paper and a blanket on it. That was her bed. To keep warm, she had to keep all her clothes on. I had not seen anything like this for a long time.

She had gone through two relationships with men and had three children. She was now alone. Her mother and sister lived in a trailer close by. She had to leave; they were both on drugs and no longer wanted her. The lady is 40 years old. As I talked to her, she cried and cried. She was desperate. She had gotten assistance to go to a community college where she wanted to get a degree to equip her to care for abandoned and abused children.

I am trying to get her a room or two. I hope to find her a place by Easter. What I really want is a camping trailer. That would be so much better for her. The place she has built is terrible and she can never finish it. Please pray that I can find an affordable used camper trailer.

How can I retire when there is such a need as this lady has?"

When I read this story about this poor woman, I could only think of the ice storm our region just went through and wonder how many are out there were just like her needing so much help. I am quite sure when all settles and electric and water are restored that we will get flooded with calls to help with house damages. Please pray that we can in some way help those that need it. On one more note after writing this article, our region was hit with five inches of rain in a 24 hour period leaving our region with extensive flood damage. Please keep our community in your prayers.