



Buy Fresh—Buy Local

By Bob Wilkins, Director

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Food and money—commodities most of us use on a daily basis. In fact, they are referred to as necessities in our culture today because we cannot live without them. The day has long past in these parts when folks grew most of their own food and used a bartering system to cover everything else. This is not a history lesson, but an introduction to some innovative programs at Heart and Hand that revolve around food and money and an economic term known as the “food income gap.”

In West Virginia it is estimated that 6 billion dollars are spent each year on food, but only a very small portion of this amount represents food or dollars from products grown within our state. If we could come up with a way to increase the local production of food by guaranteeing growers that their items

would have local buyers, we could keep more money in the regional economy. One solution is the establishment of a year-round farm market, expanding the buyers to include larger area consumers, like nursing homes and schools.

The Heart and Hand Community Farm Market is expanding to provide this type of opportunity to the greater Barbour County area. As part of a consortium, we have been awarded a grant to keep our market open all year. This will include expanding the growing season through innovative gardening methods, such as high tunnels and research-tested ground covers. We will also be marketing more products which have a year-round production schedule. These items include baked

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Advance Special
391361

Buy Fresh—Buy Local (cont'd)

goods and meat products. The key to success is matching the needs of the buyers with farm production. An ongoing local exchange between growers and buyers is already underway so that there is direct contact and clear communications between all parties involved.

We are also exploring sustainable agriculture and value-added products. Having local residential buyers pay a monthly commitment fee, also known as a share, in exchange for a weekly basket of produce delivered to their home is one idea. Another way is to help the grower know what the consumer actually wants to buy. Targeting the consumer, rather than just growing items because it is fun, increases the potential sale and keeps more money locally. A good example of value-added product is the potato. Fresh dug potatoes go fast, but if we also provide potatoes already peeled

for canning or cut for frying, the consumer saves some time and will pay for this added value. Potatoes are a perfect crop for a year round market, too.

Our market has come a long way from the roadside stand of sixteen years ago. Now we are helping to make fruit and vegetable production a local economic industry rather than just a seasonal specialty store. Buying local also cuts down on costs for transportation (environmental issues and highway degradation) that get added on to the price consumers pay.

In the Book of Genesis, Chapter 1, God said “let the land produce vegetation, seed-bearing plants and trees . . . and God saw that it was good.” (Gen. 1:11-12) Well, using the Bible as a guide gives both insight and direction to undertake this major enterprise at this time. Farmers—start your (tractor) engines!

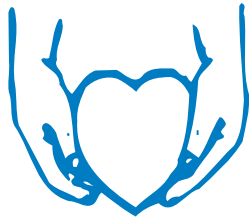
All in a Day's Work



Georgia Allen, who began her 20th year at Heart and Hand this April, demonstrates her expertise at “putting out fires” at a recent staff training on safety issues.

A new thrift store mascot? Jane Tallman, clerk at the Belington Thrift Store and an avid animal lover, shows off the hen(?) someone brought by for her to rescue. Originally named, Mary Lou, the cute chick soon grew into the fine fella seen here, now known as Henry!





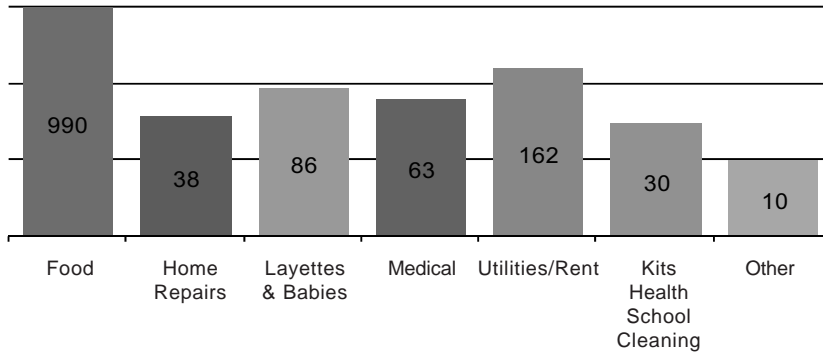
HEART AND HAND HOUSE, INC.

2008 Dollar Value of Service to Barbour County = \$1,099,850

Assistance = \$221,466
 Thrift Stores = \$383,167
 Volunteer Hours = \$450,217
 Other = \$ 45,000

2008 Assistance Requests = 1,379

(does not include Thrift Stores, Christmas, After School or Garden Market)



Food

39,764 meals provided

Thrift Stores

Some items we provided:
 Seasonal clothing, bulk clothing, toys, quilts, appliances, rags, crafts, antiques, Christian books
 Value: \$383,167

Garden Market

77 Growers
 32,642 pounds sold

Housing

29 home repair projects
 3 new homes
 Total Value: \$485,928
 (materials and hours)

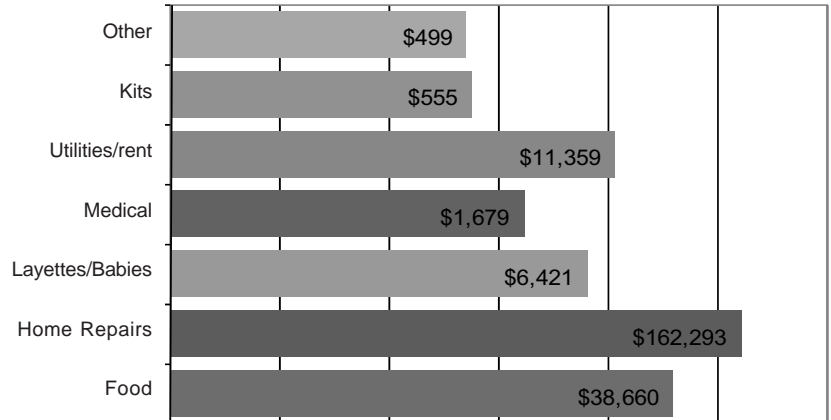
Christmas

130 families participated in Christmas Toy Store program
 Over 265 children benefited
 Value: \$7,500

80 Head Start children
 Received gift bags
 Value: \$1,000

Total Value: \$8,500

2008 Estimated Value of Assistance = \$221,466



2008 Volunteer Hours = 30,627



Out of County Volunteers—22,053
 Local Volunteers—5,852
 Mennonite Volunteer Service—1,487
 Work Study/Community Service Class—366
 Office and Board—457
 Training—413

Estimated Value of Services = \$450,217

RIPPLE

After School & Summer Youth/Family Program funded by a Grant from INV Div. Of Criminal Justice Services

114 participants/78 youth
 2 community projects

Bibles

Over 100 Holy Bibles were given away to our clients. We also include scripture tracts in all our food boxes.

Heart and Hand Ministries
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Do the “Green” Thing!

Trying to be a little more environmentally conscious these days? We’d like to offer a way to help you —and us—be better stewards of our resources: sign-up to receive the Heart and Hand newsletter by email. Just

send an email to ministry@heartandhandhouse.org and type “Email Newsletter” in the subject line. Not only will it save paper, postage, and printing costs, we’ll all be doing our part to make our world a little “greener.”



Comments from the Director

Director’s Thoughts

Although the Barbour County area has not suffered statistically like the rest of the country during this recession, many people are feeling the effects of these difficult economic times. The single parent mom who has been laid-off from her job could care less about statistics. She is worried about feeding her kids. The retired shop mechanic, who received a reduction of benefits statement from his pension plan due to investment losses, is concerned about paying for his

wife’s surgery. The fact that he is one of several million with the same problem is of little comfort. The ability of Heart and Hand House to still be able to provide food items and utility assistance because of the generosity of many individual donors and church support is not taken lightly or for granted. We are there during these difficult times for those facing crisis because you are there for us. You are appreciated more than you will ever know.

Thank you,
Bob Wilkins

