

# Telling the Story of



Providing Necessities for Living While Equipping People for Life

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

## A Message from our Executive Director

**caring.** /keriNG/ adjective

Displaying kindness and concern for others.

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you." Ephesians 4:32 (CSB).



*2021 has truly been a year of caring for others. We all experience difficult and challenging seasons in our life. Our clients who utilize our services are no different. During these seasons in our life, many of us reach out to family and friends for assistance, comfort, and love. This network is the "glue" that holds things together. For many of our clients, the Real Life Center provides that caring and compassionate network that they depend on day-to-day. Providing kindness and concern for others comes from the heart of a servant— one that considers others before self, uses one's abilities and spiritual gifts to help others, and understands that to be great, one must be the least among others. We are so thankful that God has brought us a staff and volunteer team that has decided to serve others vs. themselves and model Jesus who was the greatest servant of all. So, although 2021 brought many critical needs through our doors each day, we are thankful that we were able to provide hope to others by caring for them as Christ does for us. We are his hands and feet in a very tangible manner here in our community.*

*Matthew 12:26 (CSB): If anyone serves me, he must follow me. Where I am, there my servant also will be. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.*

*Thanks to all of you who are a part of the work we do, either by praying, giving, or serving with us!*

*Greg Georgianni*

### Our Team

**Executive Director** Greg Georgianni

**Business Director** Dana McKay

**Development and Special Projects Manager** Jennifer Nolder

**Operations Manager** Pete Trebotte

**Client Care Coordinator** Seth Crouch

**Volunteer Coordinator** Matt Lowe

**Food Drive Coordinator** Kristen Phillips

**Marketing & Educational Coordinator** Tessa Henson

**Operations Support/Orchard Coordinator** Steve Thomas



### Board of Directors 2022

Chris Clark ✦ Betty Crisp ✦ Craig Evans ✦ Deborah Floyd

Pastor Keith Moore ✦ Anne Quiello ✦ Dan Rankin



# Real Help, Real Hope

## Our Volunteers: Being the Hands and Feet of Jesus



"Our volunteers are a perfect example of the Body of Christ at work. It continually amazes me to see how many unique gifts and talents our volunteers have and how they all come together to meet the needs of those in our community. As I observe our volunteers in action, I am reminded that there is no particular skill set needed to serve. We are all called to care for one another. A verse that I think summarizes our team of volunteers well is Galatians 6:10 - 'Therefore, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to everyone.'" - Matt Lowe, RLC Volunteer Coordinator



"I'm so grateful for the gentle way God reveals His kingdom through the people, authentic relationships and met needs at the Real Life Center. My time with other volunteers, staff and clients is such an encouragement to me each week.

Our Heavenly Father put us in community to bear one another's burdens and be "fellow sojourners." And that's what plays out as we walk together through difficult times.



At the Real Life Center, we have the privilege to enter into someone's story, provide a listening ear, perhaps meet a physical need, encourage and pray together. Something beautiful and mysterious happens when we do this. We both walk away stronger, mutually encouraged and reminded of God's love for us."

- Alison, RLC Volunteer





# Your Caring Is Impacting Lives

There are three ways our donors, church partners, business community, and volunteers have cared for our clients:

**Prayer:** Praying for continued financial support and direction for our ministry and praying for God's peace for our clients as they go through life's most challenging moments.

**Giving:** Sacrificial giving to support the Real Life Center allows us to continue to meet the needs presented to us each and every day.

**Serving:** Volunteers enable us to continue our work and allow us to keep 87% of our donations focused on our clients through our programming.

This care has helped us pay rent, mortgage, and utility bills for families in need, while offering them educational classes and job referral support to assist them in becoming economically secure. We were also able to help several clients start new businesses through our new Helping Hand Grant program– a life changing opportunity.



**14,127  
visits**

to the RLC from families  
needing assistance



Weekly visits to our Food Pantry  
made it possible for a family to  
save over



**\$542/month**

to help pay other bills

**661,985  
pounds**

of food was  
distributed



## 2021 Food Drives

We are able to provide a large variety of non-perishable food items to the families that we serve in our Food Pantry because of the generosity of our community. We partner with many local churches, schools, businesses, and organizations who host food drives to keep our food pantry shelves stocked. In 2021, we were blessed with the gift of food donations from over 70 food drives.



## Educational Classes – *Know Better, Be Better*

The Real Life Center gives individuals and families the opportunity to grow through a variety of **free** educational classes covering topics such as money management, health and wellness, spiritual growth, maintaining healthy relationships and more.



**78%**  
**of families**  
contacted after 3  
months reported  
stability in their  
household



**184**  
**first time**  
financial partners



**\$317,903**

paid by RLC for  
mortgage, rent, and  
utility bills helping  
keep families in their  
homes in 2021

This amount is



**34%**  
**more**  
than we paid  
in 2020

## Financial Assistance Program

In 2021, our Financial Assistance Program played a pivotal role in changing lives. With many people in our community still recuperating from the pandemic, losing their jobs and falling behind on bills, the Real Life Center was able to be a cornerstone. Throughout the year our goal was to make sure we were caring for as many families in our community as possible by enrolling them in our full program. This would give them access to our pantry, market, classes, clothing closet, and financial help, if needed.

# Support for Real Life





# A Look Behind the Scenes



## A Warm Welcome

At the Real Life Center, we strive to help our families and individuals feel comfortable and at peace when they walk through the door. We want them to come in with a sense of safety and dignity and know that they are cared for.



## The Warehouse

Behind the scenes at the Real Life Center is a 5,335 square foot climate controlled warehouse where all food and non-food donations are received, processed, stored, and staged for distribution to our client families. The warehouse is equipped with two refrigerated box trucks, one standard box truck, modern material handling equipment, and a loading dock, making it possible to pick-up and receive pallet-sized donations.

The warehouse contains a commercial walk-in cooler and freezer that enable us to receive a variety of food product to include meat, dairy, deli, and frozen food items, along with fresh produce. All food items received at the Real Life Center are inspected at least twice for damage and freshness before they are distributed to our families.



**Did you know...** the Real Life Center has been designated a critical facility by the Fayette County Emergency Management Agency, and is a vital component of the Faith Based Disaster Network which operates in support of the county's disaster response, relief, and recovery efforts.





*"The Harvest for Real Life Orchard and Garden was created to provide wholesome fresh fruit and vegetables for those in need at the Real Life Center. In this, it functions very well. The orchard and garden also provide a sense of satisfaction for those that volunteer. We get to respond positively to Christ's command to feed and care for those in need - and this is a real sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. We are made for this!"*

*- Steve*



Thanks to the continued partnership of Southside Church and their Be Rich Campaign, our orchard and garden teams were blessed with a John Deere Gator. This addition has greatly eased some of the rigorous duties that come with caring for and harvesting the many fruit and vegetable plants in our Harvest for Real Life Orchard and Garden.



**7,577  
pounds**

of produce harvested from  
our Harvest for Real Life  
Orchard and Garden

**Taste and See that the Lord is Good** Psalm 34:8  
Harvest for Real Life Orchard and Garden







# Help in Motion

## Mobile Food Pantry



The Mobile Food Pantry is an additional program that we offer through our partnership with the Atlanta Community Food Bank. Our partners at Grace Church host the Mobile Food Pantry once a month. Volunteers

**125  
families**

on average served each month through the Mobile Food Pantry



from several community churches serve each month to distribute a variety of food to families who are food insecure. This program is available to any family or individual in need regardless of their county of residence. In 2021, we served an average of 125 families each month at our Mobile Food Pantry.

## BackPack Buddies

In 2021 we were so grateful to be able to distribute 1,710 Backpack Buddies bags to local elementary school students that rely on free school meals for their food security. These bags represent 12,630 meals that fill the bellies of children who don't always know where their next meal is coming from when they leave school. We have an incredible team of dedicated volunteers who help pack, organize, sort, and deliver these bags to area elementary schools. These bags not only deliver nutritious and delicious kid-friendly meals, but they come with the reminder that people do care.

**1,710  
backpacks**

with food were given to children in our community





## Career Coaching and Job Referral

At the Real Life Center, the Career Coaching and Job Referral program helps individuals move forward through employment assistance. This program is especially beneficial for those that are unemployed, have recently been laid-off, gone through divorce, or find themselves in a job that is not a good fit.

Services available through this program include:

- Skills assessment to identify strengths
- Assistance in understanding the client's desired industry
- Job search plan development, goals, and accountability
- Job referrals
- Assistance with resume development
- Teaching effective interviewing skills



**Britleigh – Helping Hand Grant Recipient**

## Helping Hand Business Grant

The Helping Hand Grant Program provides a holistic approach to helping families. The one-time grant assists with the financial requirements of starting a business. Clients enrolled in our full program have the opportunity to start their dream business or help an existing one grow. This gives our clients a chance to exercise creativity and independence while working to achieve economic security.

One of six recipients of the Helping Hand Grant in 2021, Britleigh started her own event planning business. She used her grant funds to purchase a van and supplies to get started. She then went on to create a logo, and before she knew it, her small business was up and running. The Real Life Center was thrilled to partner with Britleigh to bring her vision to fruition.



# Empowering People





# Our Community

## Building Hope Together

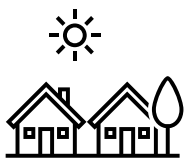
### Church Partners

Our extended church network is critical to how we care for our clients. Many of our church partners use the Real Life Center as an extension of their mission to care for those in need locally. In addition, various church groups serve at the Real Life Center giving hundreds of volunteer hours per year in service.



### Business Partners

Over 70 local businesses provide financial and in-person support to the Real Life Center. This support comes through their community action committees, or for smaller business partners, out of a heart of compassion through charitable giving. Either way, business partners understand our strengths and position in the community to care holistically for those who are struggling. As our business partners walk with us, we in turn are able to walk alongside our clients.



## Our Neighbors

### Who We Cared For:

Adults: **51%**  
Seniors: **19%**  
Minors: **30%**

Fayette County: **57%**  
Coweta County: **39%**  
Other Counties: **4%**

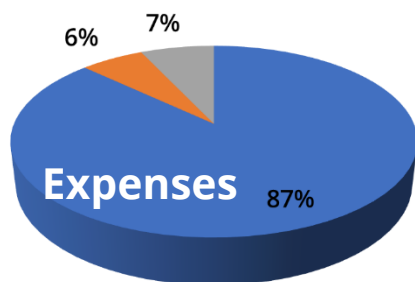
College/Tech Degree: **34%**  
High School Diploma: **52%**  
Incomplete Education: **14%**



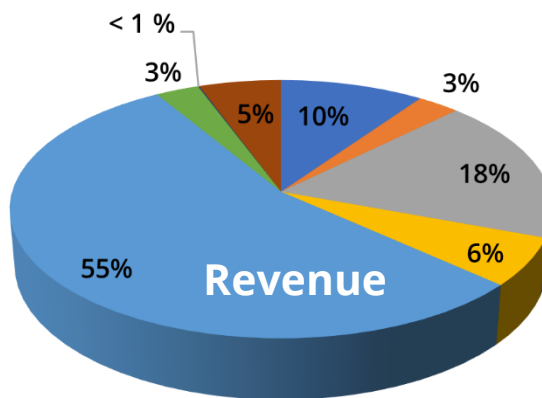
# Financials

## Partnering Together

It is because of **you** – generous individuals, local businesses, and churches that we are able to care for and bring hope to our community. We are incredibly grateful for your support that helps change lives.



■ Program  
■ Fundraising  
■ Administrative



■ Dogwood	\$246,735
■ Churches	\$72,484
■ Individuals	\$454,853
■ Business	\$152,293
■ In-Kind	\$1,381,363
■ Grants	\$74,622
■ Other	\$2,237
■ Restricted	\$141,020

Total - **\$2,525,607**

## What's Ahead in 2022

- ✓ Provide additional mental health and ministerial support for our clients
- ✓ Expand our Helping Hand Grant program to provide additional business mentoring assistance
- ✓ Expand our BackPack Buddies program to reach additional schools and serve food-insecure children through weekends, holidays, and school breaks



*"We can't be everything to everyone, but we can be everything to someone. At the Real Life Center our volunteers and staff are able to meet the needs of each client coming through our doors daily for assistance. We see each client as someone in need, a unique creation of God, worthy of dignity and respect. We have the opportunity to walk alongside our clients, during what is for many, the most challenging season in their life."*

*We cannot do what we do best without the support of our donors, church partners and volunteers who help us serve those struggling in our community, share the gospel message, and provide hope."*

*Help carry one another's burdens, and in this way, you will obey the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2 – GNTD).*

- Greg Georgianni, RLC Executive Director





By giving, praying, or volunteering, you could be the one thing that changes a person's story....forever.

## Donate funds

- Match your gift: Check with your employer about a Matching Gift program
- Recurring or individual gifts
- Crowdfunding: Use MobileCause or Facebook to motivate your friends, family and coworkers to raise funds to support our programs in honor of your birthday
- Community Fundraising Events: Raise money for the Real Life Center by organizing a fundraiser
- Give a gift in honor or in memory of a friend or family member

## Help harvest our blueberries during U-Pick 4 Others

Visit [www.reallifecenter.org/u-pick](http://www.reallifecenter.org/u-pick)

## Donate when you shop

- AmazonSmile: go to <https://smile.amazon.com> and select the Real Life Center as the charity of your choice
- Kroger: go to <https://www.kroger.com/communityrewards> and follow the member enrollment steps for linking your Kroger Plus Card to the Real Life Center

## Donate items

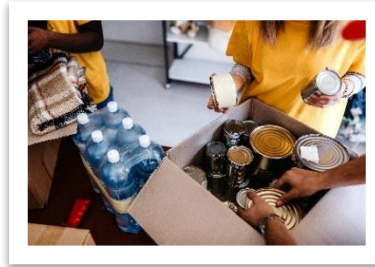
- Donate food and personal care items: Please visit [www.reallifecenter.org/stock-our-pantry/](http://www.reallifecenter.org/stock-our-pantry/) for our most needed items list

## Volunteer

Visit [www.reallifecenter.org/volunteer/](http://www.reallifecenter.org/volunteer/)

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Tyrone, GA 30290  
770-631-9334  
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[www.RealLifeCenter.org](http://www.RealLifeCenter.org)



Mon-Thurs 9am-12pm, Thurs 5-7pm  
Real Life Center is a mission of Dogwood Church