



Summer 2019 Newsletter

Summer Update

2018-2019 has been one of the biggest years Agape has ever seen. One example is that just in terms of financial growth, we have seen a 64% increase of our total funds between this year and last. The result of this God-given newfound growth is new connections, relationships, support, time, and the capacity to serve more youth and migrant farmworker families. It has allowed us to have a permanent, full-time, and sustainable Director position. With more time the Director and staff have been able to support the staff at the Northwest Educational Service



District and the Lynden School District, in creating a summer school and meals program for the children at several local migrant farmworker camps. We have also had the opportunity to attend Immigration Task Force and health care meetings, where we collaborate with the Whatcom County community,



government, and organizations to work to better recognize and protect the human dignity of our immigrant families who reside in our county. It has been an incredible honor to be recognized as a leader in the ways we serve and build relationships with the migrant

farmworker community. This summer we also developed the capacity to work with local volunteers who serve with us during the summer. In

addition, we created an Agape Advisory Committee which is made up of a group of thoughtful, committed individuals who will support and guide us in our decision making, outreach, and development. We are grateful to work with so many wonderful people and volunteers over this past year.



As of this August 2019, Agape will transition to be housed at the Archdiocese of Seattle within the Office of Pastoral Ministries, specifically Pastoral Care and Outreach. With this transition, the ministry and service of Agape will still remain in Whatcom County. The Agape staff is excited to continue leading the programming and directing the growth of our service project with the newfound support of the Archdiocese. Part of our vision and dreams for Agape for the future include: acquiring a building, increasing our capacity to house youth and parish volunteer groups throughout the year, as well as expand our outreach in Whatcom county, and even statewide.

Director Update & Farewell: Melina Sergent

I don't think 5.5 years ago when I applied on a whim to work for Agape that I could have possibly imagined I would be where I am today. 35+ weeks of Agape and 1.5 years of running Agape full time later, I can truly say what a blessing it has been. Through these years I have developed a true desire to serve and an unending trust in God's plan. Agape is His program and I am thankful He worked through me to develop it into what it is now. I have also developed incredible relationships with many of you, supporters of Agape, the children and migrant families, youth, adult leaders, leaders of local community organizations, and of course the Agape staff. Through this time I have grown in my leadership, and communication skills, in virtue, and in selfless love and compassion.

Agape has been one of the greatest gifts a person could ever receive and I am truly grateful God chose me as the recipient.

Many of you know as of August 9th, for health reasons I am officially stepping down from my role as Director of Agape. However, I am excited to pass the torch to Kelsey, who is remarkably gifted. Right before Kelsey arrived for her interview, our team prayed that the Lord would make my successor obvious to us. He certainly made it obvious in the interview and she has since exceeded our expectations. She is truly a gift to this program and I am excited for the growth her faith and dedication will bring. In the next several months I will be getting married, working full-time from home with Young Living, and soon residing with my husband in Bellingham. I will also remain connected with Agape and continue to use my gifts year round as a volunteer. I also would love to continue the friendships I have made with each of you. Feel free to reach out to me any time as I would love to catch up with you! Thank you for putting your trust in me over the years. I now ask you to place your trust in God as Agape is truly His program, and He has chosen Kelsey to continue the mission of Agape.

Many thanks, Melina Sergent, Agape Director 2015-2019. melinasergent@hotmail.com



By the Numbers: Summer 2019

- 13 Parishes from the Archdiocese of Seattle
- 207 participants (youth and adult)
- 26 additional local volunteers
- 5,505 volunteer hours completed throughout the summer
- 6 staff members
- 158 families served on average each week at the food bank
- 5,286 total people served by our food bank
- 27,500 pounds of food given
- 17 partner community agencies
- 4 college scholarships awarded
- 67 annual and monthly financial supporters
- 36 members of the Agape Prayer Team
- 5 members of the Agape Advisory Committee
- 100% unconditional, sacrificial, godly, agape love



Staff Update & Welcome: Kelsey Harrington

My sophomore year of college, 2007, I had a voicemail from an upperclassman mentor telling me to apply for a job with the Agape Service Project. I didn't know what Agape was, but I trusted Scott's insight, and trusted the 2 lead employees Rachael & Sara.

Well, following Scott's advice may have been one of the best decisions I've ever made. Working for Agape for 3 years in college pretty much shaped every aspect of who I am today. Through Agape, God broke me open in so many ways & put me back together with the grace & wisdom of Catholic Social Teaching, the migrant worker community, the youth groups & youth ministers, faith-filled & dedicated co-workers, and the joy of service. I am beyond excited and honored to be returning to Agape 12 years later.



I have spent the summer learning from the visionary Melina & am now attempting to honor God's work, vision, & goals for this amazing & growing program. So what are some of those goals bouncing around in prayer? Some big ones, like our own building for our large & growing food bank to allow expanded services for the migrant community. Our own building... a girl can dream. Some more immediate goals include expanding pre-trip preparation and post-trip life-application resources and experiences for our youth ministers and youth group students. And continuing to develop partnerships with other Whatcom County agencies that also uphold the dignity of our migrant brothers and sisters and are able to provide services beyond our capabilities.

The future growth of Agape is in God's hands. But what I do know is that for the past 15 years, with the grace of God, the Agape Service Project has: affirmed the dignity of the migrant community and served their immediate needs; taught our youth the joy of service and empowered them through prayer and Catholic Social Teaching; formed young adults to be disciples and professional ministers; and praised God for His immense generosity. And these things will remain the same. May God abundantly bless this amazing program that is rooted in love of God and love of neighbor.

Reflection: Migrant Farmworker Youth

Hi my name is Daniela, I am 12 and I have known Agape for 12 years. Agape has been really helpful and amazing to us migrant people. They have helped us with so much supporting us with food and entertainment for us kids. Agape does games, crafts, and bbqs on Thursdays. I like when Agape comes to our camp because I get to have something to do and not be bored all day. And because I have a lot of fun. Since I have to help out at home all day, I have time to go outside and have fun and just be myself with Agape. I enjoy when they do the food bank because it helps our family and everybody else's. And they give out clothes and toys. And on their last week they give out backpacks with tons of supplies that gets us ready for school. I am so thankful for everything they have done for me and am super excited for what they have planned for next year. Thank you for supporting us.



- Daniela, 12, Migrant Youth

Food Bank Update 2019

This year we worked with several local organizations to expand our services and broaden the impact of our food bank. Each week, the Bellingham Food Bank provided us with produce, eggs, and diapers. They additionally allowed us to use their facility to store and divide maseca to be distributed at the food bank. The maseca was graciously donated by Northwest Harvest. The Ferndale Food Bank contributed beans, rice, diapers, and wipes. From Project Hope in Lynden, we received canned goods and pasta. Many of these organizations delivered their items to the food bank site, reducing preparation time while accommodating the needs of our program. We were able to further our reach through the generous delivery service offered by Christ the King church and Pastor William. This allowed families without transportation to access our services. Additionally, we would like to thank Third Christian Reformed Church for sharing their facilities and providing a site for our food bank for the last 11 years. Last but not least, many of our donations came from our parishes and members of our local community. We are very appreciative of the youth, adult leaders, and volunteers that made our food bank possible each week. Looking at the big picture, this community is working together to support our food bank, regardless of religious affiliation and location within western Washington.

We began serving an additional migrant camp this summer. This means we are reaching at least 12 more families. The number of families in attendance at our food bank has also increased. The first week we served a record of 232 families. Our average for this summer was 158 families each week. We predict that changes in the agricultural seasons have drawn more workers to the area earlier in the summer. Our higher numbers may also be attributed to greater awareness of the resources available at our food bank.

In the future, we hope to acquire a building, allowing for more permanent storage and the ability to serve refrigerated items. We also hope to incorporate more sustainable practices into the set up of our food bank, especially in regards to our packaging materials. We would like to offer sustainable waste disposal. One of our current goals is to provide a meal to the families we serve. In addition, we plan to continue networking with other food banks and community organizations. This will allow us to improve our practices, increase our services, and provide information that will assist families in requesting and obtaining medical and financial aid. If possible, we hope to do more of our food bank preparations throughout the year. We are so thankful for the support we receive from our community in our mission to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ.



Blog Post Reflection: Youth Participants

I am only human. God made me to be incomplete without His love, but he also made me in ways that let me spread the same kind of love that He infinitely gives, Agape. I never had a great childhood, so to give these kids a chance at something I lacked was so emotional. Leaving these kids made my heartache and everyone in our group would agree that these kids left a mark in our hearts that will last forever, even if we forget their faces, but we also left something with them that I hope they never forget. Happiness and joy in days that are tough for kids that are so young to have to experience. I hope that we were able to relieve their troubles for the few hours we got to know them.

- Week 4: St John the Baptist Covington- Thursday



Adult Leader Reflection

I still remember the first time I came to Agape as a youth back in 2015. I was scared, nervous and had no idea what to expect. We prayed for Gods help, we learned of the lives of Migrant families and we worked and played so the migrant families can have some relief. As each day came and went, it not only filled me with a great sense of accomplishment, but it also made me feel quite upset. We as a parish had a great time during the week, but there was one basic underlying issue that needed to be fixed and that was that these migrant workers needs help. But that's the beauty of Agape, to make a difference, you must start somewhere.

Now in 2019, as an adult leader, the work is still as prevalent as it was back then and no one is giving up on these migrant workers. Not only do we get to serve those who need it the most with bigger strides every year, but I can also see the impact it has on the youth we bring. They see the faces of those who pick our food and how unfairly they're treated, they see the lengths families will go to survive, what they endure, and they see the faces of young children whose future can change if we continue to make a stand for migrant workers.

Our youth get inspired and thus start to spread awareness, they adjust their lifestyle so the lives of the migrant workers may improve. There is a fire of hope and determination in all who attend and I can't help but thank Agape for giving us the spark to start it all.

- Luaifoa PaoPao III, Adult Leader, St. Theresa's Federal Way





Sponsor & Partner Thank You

Thank you to all our sponsors! Thank you to our Support Team and Prayer Team for your year-round contributions and prayers. Thank you to the Director's Steering Committee for your developmental and personal support. Thank you, Emma and the WWU Catholic Newman Center for all your support. Thank you, Bellingham Food Bank, Ferndale Food Bank, Lynden Food Bank, and NW Harvest for food and donations. Thank you Joe for providing books for the food bank. Thank you, Christ the King and Pastor William for delivering food to families at camps. Thank you, Third Christian Reformed Church for giving us a space to host our food bank every week. Thank you, Johnson Team Real Estate and Fountain Rental for providing trucks for the food bank. Thank you, Barkley Haggen, Fairhaven Haggen, Sehome Haggen, Guide-Meridian Haggen, Ferndale Haggen, and Bellingham Grocery Outlet for allowing us to table outside your stores. Thank you, Tanya Rojas, Clint Weckerly, and NWESD for community support and providing summer school. Thank you, SeaMar, L&I, and other community groups for your collaborative support and service to the migrant farmworker community. Thank you, Lynden School District for providing summer meals at the camps. Thank you Archdiocese of Seattle for your support. Thank you, Sacred Heart Parish and staff for allowing us to use your space all summer. Thank you, Assumption Church and staff for providing space and support all year. Thank you, YMCA, Arne Hanna, and Homestead Fitness Center for letting us use your facilities. Thank you, Palateria la flor de Michoacán for providing paletas. Thank you, Avenue Bread for providing bread for us all summer. Thank you, Bellingham Screen Printing for printing our gear this summer. Thank you, Growing Veterans, Bellingham Country Gardens, Breckenridge Blueberries, and Clearian Blueberries for allowing us to serve at your farms each week. Thank you to all the youth groups, St. Louise, Sacred Heart Enumclaw, Mary Queen of Peace, St Rose Longview, Holy Disciples, St Anthony's, St Theresa's, St John the Baptist, St. Catherine of Siena, Our Lady of the Lake, St Andrew's, St Joseph's, and Our Lady Queen of Heaven who came for a week during the summer to serve with us. Thank you to all weekly volunteers for helping serve with us. Thank you to everyone else who has supported us in any way and prayed for us in order to make this summer happen. Last but not least, a big thank you to Jesus for being our rock and providing for us. We could not have done it without you!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

May God Bless You Abundantly,

The 2019 Agape Staff

Melina Sergent, Kelsey Harrington, Emily Hillman,

Ellen Golden, Juan Balmedina, Kendra Baker



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