



Special Issue

*"Committed to sharing God's gifts among all peoples of the world"* Appalachia 2008

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*A good deed  
is never lost:  
he who sows  
courtesy reaps  
friendship;  
and he who  
plants kindness  
gathers love.*

**Basil**

### OLD FURNITURE BRINGS NEW HOPE *by Carol Fanelli*

They huddled by their old battered pick-up trucks and other assorted vehicles watching warily as we arrived. They did not know us and were not quite sure of our motives. Were we there to pity them or question why they were in need? Was there going to be a charge for the items they were not told about?

"Come closer", I said. "I want to tell you why we are here. You need to know everything we brought has been freely donated and everyone who helped is a volunteer. All of us have felt a pull on our hearts to answer God's call of service. God does hear your prayers for help. He cares about you and has sent us to help in your time of need." And as I spoke their faces changed. Smiles broke out, shoulders relaxed, and their eyes became alight with hope.

Volunteers eagerly stepped forward to help unload the trailer. It was a group effort as the men carried furniture of all kinds to each other's space in the school yard. Items that were no longer needed here in Lancaster found a new home and became useful again in Kentucky. Laughter rang out along with the many echoed cries of "Thank You!" There was furniture for every room in the house along with appliances both large and small. Baby items and building materials were gratefully accepted.

But individual families were not the only recipients. This trip we had donations from a local church and a nearby school to be used in a children's setting. These were assigned to a church in Kentucky that wanted to start a children's ministry. They had no money in their budget to purchase chairs, tables and other items needed specifically for children. These donations were an answer to their prayers.



*Waiting and hoping*

In addition to the 36 families who received a direct donation many others would also indirectly benefit from our trip. Boxes and boxes of toiletries, toys and school items were delivered to the office of our contact organization in Hindman. These items will be given out throughout the year as requests are made by those in dire need.

Before I knew it, the truck was unloaded and the school yard began to empty out. It had taken us several months to collect, sort, clean and finally load the truck. In less than two short hours everything was distributed. We waved goodbye to the last of the recipients and the volunteers and reflected on all that had taken place. I breathed a prayer of thanks to a loving Father for allowing me to serve Him by sharing with those in need. Somehow it always seems I receive so much more in return.

## IS IT WORTH THE DIFFERENCE? by Tom Fanelli

On a sunny Friday afternoon I left work early to begin the long drive out to Knott County, Kentucky. On Saturday we would meet up with our volunteer truck driver, Jim Meck, with another load of furniture and assorted items for the people of this part of Appalachia. It is hard to believe this was our fourth trip to Kentucky and I was grateful to all who helped make it possible.



*Lauda's home when I first visited. She lived in a small room on the right side of the house. Cinder block steps led to the rickety porch.*

Some people have asked me why I do this since we obviously are not making an economic change in the hills of Kentucky. My belief is if we can help just one person and make a difference right now in their life it was worth the entire trip. In most cases what we do directly impacts 30 to 40 families by supplying them with much needed furniture and appliances so they can live "like the rest of us" who so often take what we have for granted.

On our first trip in 2006 we visited a woman who lived in a small house her father built on the side of the mountain in the 1930's. She was reduced to living in one room that was added on about 20 years ago. The original roof leaked so badly that it destroyed the floors so it was unsafe to walk in that part of the house. There was no indoor plumbing and her home was heated by a coal stove which she had to fill by breaking up slabs of coal with an ax. Lauda was 69 years old when I first met her.

Several organizations working together over the past two years have provided a new roof and floors and the indoor

plumbing is almost complete. We were able to provide a toilet, bathroom sink and cabinets and no doubt will add a few more pieces when the house is ready. Can you imagine the difference this has made in her life?



*The outhouse*

The people that live in the hills of Appalachia are among the poorest people in the United States.

The look on their faces as we unload the truck is indescribable. They smile and laugh (and sometimes cry) as together we all carry the pieces to their cars and battered old trucks that don't even look as though they will make it home. Everyone works together and their sincere gratefulness is very apparent. They help each other load the vehicles and take turns driving their treasures home. In about 1 ½ hours we are finished and the truck is empty but my heart is full.

I look back on the day and thank God that he shook me and let me see that we can help one by one and two by two and really make a difference in someone's life. We can offer our hands in service and let them know that someone cares about them. You may say, "Why?" I say, "Why not?" Jesus said whatever we do to the least of His people we do unto Him. As for me and my house – we will follow the Lord.



*Lauda on her new porch with steps and a railing. Note the door and window frames, siding, and drain spouts.*