



SALS JOURNAL

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Beards Fork Clinic Reopens in July

SALS and New River Health Association have agreed to reopen Beards Fork Clinic in July 2012. NRHA CEO Dave Sotak announced this plan at the New River monthly board meeting on May 14. "There's definitely a need in the Page-Kincaid area where Beards Fork is located," Sotak said. "Plus that community is dealing with some major health concerns related to the strip mining going on there."

SALS director John David lauded the plan. "This program provides much needed preventive and illness care to our youth," he said. "Most of them are without health insurance. Because they are young, they don't have a lot of chronic diseases. But like many young people they have risk factors for illness and injury. They definitely need a medical home."

Staffed by Dan Doyle M.D., the clinic was open the last Friday of every month from November 2004 to June 2011. Dr. Doyle retired in July 2011 without replacement to continue clinic services. In 2012, Dr. Doyle resumed part-time clinical work with New River Health and Cabin Creek Clinic.

Under the new plan, Beards Fork Clinic will be open one day a month starting in July. The day and time have not yet been announced. Youth Build members and other SALS employees are seen without charge. Community members can be seen under the usual sliding fee plan which New River provides at all its sites. Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP, and private insurances will be billed if patients have such coverage.

No controlled substances (narcotic pain medications; ADHD drugs; anxiety medications) are stocked or prescribed at Beards Fork Clinic. If such medications are needed, this requires Behavioral Health consultation and physician care at one of the main New River sites at Scarbro, Whipple, or Fayetteville.

Twenty-First Solidarity Festival

The Southern Appalachian Labor School will be hosting its 21st annual Juneteenth Solidarity Festival at the Historic Oak Hill School on Saturday, June 23, 2012.

The event will begin at 1 p.m. and feature music, antique car show, book sale, food, various informational booths, games, historical displays, and more for the entire afternoon.

This is the 36th anniversary of service by SALS to West Virginia and the communities it serves. In addition, the event commemorates West Virginia Day and Juneteenth which marks the day that slaves learned of Abraham Lincoln's Proclamation of Emancipation.

The music schedule will be posted on the SALS website (www.sals.info) and on Facebook (Southern Appalachian Labor School) or call 304/465-4246/304/779-2772.

History of Juneteenth

Juneteenth is the oldest celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States. On June 19th 1865, Union soldiers arrived at Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and that the slaves had been freed. This was two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation. The Emancipation Proclamation had little effect in Texas because of the lack of Union military presence. There are several stories that attempt to explain the delay of receipt of this news. One report was that the messenger sent to deliver the proclamation was murdered. Another theory is that the news was withheld to maintain the labor force on the plantations. And still another is that federal troops actually waited for the slave owners to reap the benefits of one last cotton harvest before going to Texas to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation.

The celebration of June 19th was called "Juneteenth" and grew with more participation from the slave's descendants. The celebration was a time for banding together, to honor ancestors, and for prayer and thanksgiving. Juneteenth is highly revered in Texas with many descen-

continued on page 14

The Man Behind Frasure Creek

by Andrew Munn

It seems like each time you drive up and down WV 61 another piece of the mountain has been demolished. As the strip mine has expanded from above Dempsey Branch to the back of Glenco Hollow, so have people's concerns about damage to property and health. Residents of Taylor Branch, Kincaid, and Page have all complained of blasting damage to their homes, and the loss of all West Virginian's birthright – our mountains.

Who's behind this? If you've been following the news, you'll know its Frasure Creek Mining Company and its parent company Essar Minerals, a part of the multi national corporation Essar Group, from Mumbai, India. Essar Minerals has an office for their West Virginia and Kentucky operations near Nitro – the address is 4978 Teays Valley Road, Scott Depot, WV. In early April, a couple of us paid them a visit to find out a bit about the company and let them know folks were concerned about their plans to strip the mountain surrounding Beards Fork and Mulberry Branch.

Going unannounced, we weren't quite sure what to expect – would we get thrown out? Left to languish in a waiting room? Who would we meet? We walked in the front doors and asked the receptionist to talk with "the person in charge of Frasure Creek's Fayette County Operations." And so we met W. Douglas Blackburn Jr., the new president of Frasure Creek Mining.

Here's what you should know about Blackburn. Much of it is from his resume, which you can find on his Black Acres consulting website.

- Prior to beginning his presidency of Frasure Creek, he ran an industry consulting company called Black Acres.
- Blackburn has a breadth of experience managing coal operations, mostly with Massey Energy from 1977 to 1990:

*In his resume, he boasts: "increased coal production by 60%, while reducing staff (jobs) by 70%"

**"obtained a \$1.3 million judgment against United Mine Workers of America for damages caused by a secondary boycott"

*"Successfully met legal challenges by the United Mine Workers of America, thereby maintaining union-free status."

*All the while, "increasing revenue from \$0 to \$40 million and turned a profit from loss of \$5.5 million to a gain of \$4 million."

Also on his resume are numerous other aspects of coal company management, including safety programs, personal policy development, environmental permitting, and engineering. The thread that runs throughout however are job cutting, share holder profit maximization, and union busting. He's a top notch coal boss.

Do any of you UMWA members remember the picket

lines on WV 3 in Boone County when Massey bought Elk Run in the early 1980's? Blackburn was the boss who broke the union.

It's not surprising that Essar brought him onto the team at this time. Most of the workers on Frasure Creek's Fayette County mines were laid off in February as part of the industry wide job cuts because the mines weren't making profit. Bringing in an old industry hand like Blackburn indicates that Essar is looking for someone who can cut expenses (jobs) and increase profits for Essar and its shareholders.

Frasure Creek Mining began its large scale surface mining with a 568 acre operation above Loop Creek and the community of Wriston. Since then, it has expanded its operations above Page, Kincaid, and Beards Fork with three active permits, forming one continuous 1,300 acre surface mine, including a 221 acre permit to strip mine through the Source Water Protection Area for the local water utility, the Page Kincaid Public Service District (PK PSD). Due to the threat to the drinking water of approximately 2,000 residents served the PK PSD, citizens filed an appeal to revoke the permit. Following two demonstrations by residents of Fayette County and hearings for the appeal's legal arguments, the WV DEP denied the appeal. In addition to its current operations, Frasure Creek seeks an additional five permits, which would eventually expand the operation to 3,263 acres, surrounding the community of Beards Fork.

Hundreds of citizens live within a mile of the permit boundaries, and experience blasting damage, dust pollution, and occasional flooding from mine run off.

Is Your Home Shaking Yet?

If you have concerns about strip mining in your backyard call Andrew Munn at 304-574-6121.

We are getting together to protect our property and health from large scale surface mining in the area. Many people have complained of damages from blasting and mine site runoff. As individuals, the company and the state government can give you the run around. We are uniting to, because as a group, our concerns cannot be ignored. Protect your property and your neighbors and call 304-574-6121. No answer, leave a message. See article on the visit to ESSAR on page 13.

The SALS Journal is published by the Southern Appalachian Labor School, a grassroots organization dedicated to social & environmental justice and workers rights.

We welcome articles and submissions by our readers.

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Director's Report

by John David

We have bad news and good news. The bad news is that we have lost several special people in the SALS Family. One was Jeff Mullins, who contributed much to our work and was making great progress in carving a new future. Another was Chad Nichols, who also was part of the YouthBuild family. Jimmy Atkins, one of our site supervisors, lost a grand-daughter and family members of Ruth Lanham and Joyce Brown also passed. In the community, we now miss several supportive people including Leon Newman, John Witt, and several others. We also were saddened to learn that an old friend, Markete Kimbrell, passed away. Markete, who taught at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, directed the New York Street Caravan. The Caravan worked with SALS at many of our classes and functions during our early history.

The good news is that our match campaign worked. The major donation by Bruce Boyens was matched and the combined result helped us compensate for several grant applications that were not funded. We are extremely grateful for your continued loyal support that keeps hope alive for many.

We have received several grants for targeted projects. JP Morgan Chase, through YouthBuild USA, is mobilizing bank staff as volunteers and both BB & T along with the WV Affordable Housing Trust Fund will assist us in assessing usage of the Historic Oak Hill School. This will be accompanied by a small Flex-e-Grant "listening project" through the WV Development Office and a VISTA (Erica Horton) who will focus on the community center. Also, the Fayette County Commission has provided funds for some repairs and well as a continuation of services at the SALS Community Center in Beards Fork.

SALS is currently re-assessing its mission and future, which includes sustainability. The initiative, titled "Looking Back, Moving Ahead" has received support from the Benedum Foundation and will involve staff, Board Members, Youth participants, and community residents in developing a directional plan for the future.

Sister Elizabeth Hillmann, a former SALS Board Chair, is in failing health and was moved from a Cenacle House in Gainesville, Florida to a special Cenacle Home in Chicago.

Fayette County Schools/Fayette Institute of Technology had its graduation ceremony at the SALS Historic Oak Hill School on May 17, 2012. SALS had a half-dozen YouthBuild members graduate with GEDs. They were Swadye Thomas, Kenny Elmore, Jody Deane, Justin



SALS Director John David presents "MountainTop Removal and the Quest for Public Water" from the Page-Kincaid Public Service District at Appalachian Studies Association Conference March, 2012

Pence, David Buchholtz, and James Giles. Swadye received the Outstanding YouthBuild Student Award. SALS has been selected as one of 80 projects for a special study that is intended to show the value of the YouthBuild program among at-risk youth.

We would like to welcome Erica Horton and Hope Campbell as new SALS VISTAs. Erica will work on developing the Historic Oak Hill School as a community center. Hope is a Summer VISTA who will work on children-based programs at both community centers in Beards Fork and Oak Hill.

Our new Energy Express Summer Coordinator is Nikki Lucas, who is a science teacher at Midland Trail High School. She will be joined by five AmeriCorps college students in implementing the summer program that will serve 40 children from throughout the area. During that time, in cooperation with the WV Department of Education's Office of Child Nutrition, SALS will provide free breakfasts/lunches to all participants as well as a lunch program at the Montgomery swimming pool and the Historic Oak Hill School/City Park in Oak Hill.

SALS has received a number of area grants for various projects from the City of Montgomery, Fayette County Commission, BB & T, JP Morgan Chase, and the WV Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The City of Oak Hill is working with SALS for a security camera repeater mounted on the Historic Oak Hill School roof in exchange for tying in several premise cameras among those being installed.



Benthics – Kyiah Puckett counts stream critters

After School Kids Join Stream Survey

by Gary DeLuke, AmeriCorps/Vista

On Saturday, April 14th, a few of the youth who participate in the SALS after-school program were able to join in on a WV Save-Our-Streams (SOS) survey of Loop Creek. The Kanawha Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited (KVCTU) conducted the survey in order to monitor the impacts of mining and wastewater management in the Loop Creek Watershed.

Afterschool Coordinator Charlene Newkirk and AmeriCorps VISTA Gary DeLuke arrived with four youth, and all assisted with monitoring aquatic insect populations, stream flow, streambed conditions, and basic stream chemistry. Amaya Puckett, Kyiah Puckett, Joey Puckett, and Lillian Chapman especially enjoyed getting in the water to help measure stream flow, and assisting with counting and categorizing aquatic insects.



Measuring Flow (and fun) – Amaya & Jeremy Puckett



Left: Gary DeLuke (standing) and Trout Unlimited Volunteer show After School kids how its done



Benthics – L-R Charlene Newkirk, Lillian Chapman, and Joe, Kyiah & Amaya Puckett

Construction Report

by Vickie Smith, Construction Manger

Construction is well underway with all our crews. We have new rehabilitations underway and new houses underway. Training is taking place in the new Energy Star 3 requirements. We are also hoping to get a few contractors in the area certified in Green, since West Virginia has a big 0 at this time. This puts the organization at risk for a couple of grants as the West Virginia Housing Development Fund (WVHDF) wants us to subcontract five houses out and these units must be Energy Star 3. I see many hours of watching subcontractors construct these units so we can make all our funders happy.

I have been working feverishly to find tenants for our Historic Oak Hill School. It is important that we can keep the utilities on in the building. I have spent countless hours opening doors for scheduled events that are usually on the week-ends. It seems to be picking up some for special events. This is wonderful as the word gets out that it is a very nice place for the community to utilize. We are also looking for long term entities to occupy the facility.

This adventure started in what we thought would be a wonderful asset to our organization and community. Then came the discussion with the local community. Many meetings occurred in what seemed at times to be an endless task. I felt like we needed this opportunity as an organization to let people know we really are and what we offer our community. I think people need to see firsthand what we do and how we embrace the community as a whole. I have always felt that we are a very unique and diverse in many ways. With that being said it is also very hard to dispute untrue and unjust allegations about the organization, since we have been somewhat hidden for years. As in any small community rumors start and are often so misconstrued over time that many have formulated an opinion of who and what we are and do. My hope is that as time progresses we are able to show all that were concerned that we are an asset many ways and that Fayette County is lucky to have such an organization at hand. As I like to say we (SALS) did not create our substandard housing, cause our youth to give up on education and their future, or to feel there is no hope of making life just what they want. We are simply repairing it either by one home repair at a time or one educated and energetic young adult ready to take on the world and finding his or her niche in life.

Teddy Taylor, a tenant at the school, has been beneficial in deterring invaders. Someone told me he was better than a pit-bull, which of course made me laugh. But he also brings issues of fear, unknown behavior and in need of help in many ways. I have grown quite fond of him even if he demands much of my time. I get frustrated

at times and really do not know what to do to help him. I just hang in there and try to defend him as a human being that needs our help and understanding. I hope that one day people will accept him and not fear conditions that they do not understand. His mind comes and goes and he is always chatting about 20 different subjects at one time. He is really smart in many ways and I know he can remember things from long ago and current issues. He just seems to try and go 100 places at one time and gets frustrated when we cannot understand him. My wish for Teddy is to have a warm safe place and get medical treatment that will help him function much better. Everyone in town knows him and tells me stories of years past when things were much different for him. He has no family that I can gather in this area even though he talks of a brother, wife and children. He calls me his star but says I cannot tell him what to do even if I remind him of his mother. It would be very sad for me to have to ask him to leave our school in order to ease others fear and frustrations for "Teddy the pit-bull"! We are the closest thing to assisted living that he has at this time.

YouthBuild News

by Kathryn South, YouthBuild/AmeriCorps Manager

This has been a very productive spring. Six of our YouthBuild members have received their GED certificates. Congratulations to James Giles, Swayde Thomas, Kenneth Elmore, David Buckholtz, Jody Deane, and Justin Pence. You really did a great job!

Several of our youth also have become fathers for the second or third time. James Giles and his wife are expecting a baby in the fall, Jonathan Terry and his wife just had a child a few weeks ago, and John Pinson has a new daughter born in May. Congrats to fathers and the mothers of our YouthBuild family.

Everyone has been very busy this year trying to get houses completed for the families that purchased properties at Hilltop. Two new families have moved into our housing project on Sid's Lane and we hope you enjoy your new homes for many years to come. The crews did a really great job on both houses. The Historical Oak Hill School has had a lot of activity there also. The school is beginning to look like a really good place to have major events. We hope to have concerts in the 600 seat auditorium in the coming months. Currently, the space is being used by the Solid Rock Worship Center led by Pastor Greg Hurley. They have quite a crowd there each Sunday and Wednesday. Pastor Greg is quite a preacher and he also has a great singing voice. The local gospel radio channel in Summersville plays his music on a regular basis. Folks need to check out his talent. I am sure Pastor Greg would love to have folks come out to church services also.

Continues on Next Page

SALS is involved with a YouthBuild evaluation study to find out how being in the YouthBuild program advances a young person's future outcomes. We are one of 80 YouthBuild programs across the country participating in this important project. We are currently in the process of recruiting 20 to 30 youth between the ages of 16 and 24 for the YouthBuild program. The youth will have an opportunity for lots of additional resources and education through the PACT training and other Green Building trainings. Barb Painter and Vickie Smith do a great job of working with homeowners and the youth to make sure that the houses our youth build met all the LEED/Energy Star requirements. We are very proud of all of our youth and all of our staff.

I attended a mentoring conference in Orlando, Florida recently and really enjoyed seeing all of our fellow YouthBuild mentoring staff. I met with our mentoring coach Judy Taylor and learned about the training that she is doing with sites around the country. The fundraising training was very good and provided helpful information about how to ask folks to be part of our projects. Four of our mentees have been meeting with their mentors and two have passed their GEDS, which means that the time spent encouraging the youth is always time well spent.

Two of our YouthBuild graduates passed away this spring. We hate to hear such devastating news about young people who have so much they could do with their lives. Chad Nichols and Jeff Mullins were friends for many years and we shared in the good times and the bad times in each others lives. Jeff lived in Beards Fork and all of the SALS staff adopted Jeff as one of their own. He was much loved by everyone who knew him. Both young men will be sorely missed.

Easter Fun

by The Easter Bunny

The Southern Appalachian Labor School held its annual Easter egg hunt on Good Friday at the SALS Community Center in Beards Fork. Around thirty five were in attendance. The children played games, received prizes, were fed, and, of course, sent to find those Easter eggs!

The people of SALS are very thankful for everyone who supports us. We realize that it is your support and dedication to helping others that allows us to have such wonderful events. Also, we would like to give a very special thank you to the following.

John and his awesome team at Franks in Montgomery – your pizza did a disappearing act that even Houdini would envy. Your food is second to none. Everyone wanted a piece of that pie.

The Dairy Queen of Montgomery – Our kids thought it was “cool” that you were kind enough to provide them all with the coupons for the free ice cream....We totally agree.

The Wal Mart of Fayetteville – Your fifty dollar donation provided toys and candy for the kids. Thank you for helping make our event a fun and sweet success!

GO GREEN!!!

by Barbara Painter/VISTA Green Coordinator

We have swung back into the habit of having our monthly energy conservation classes ranging from using compact fluorescent light bulbs to understanding electric bills. At least 20 of the youth have received monthly certificates for these classes. Our next class for the youth will be on Passive Solar Heating.

We have started having our quarterly safety meetings. These began with one how to work in the cold weather. At our next quarterly meeting, we plan to set up a safety committee including youth, supervisors, construction manager and green coordinator.

I have learned how to do a house “write-up” along with the energy audits to hopefully take some of the load off of Vickie. I enjoy this part of the job due to the fact that I am able to actually get out of the office, meet the clients, do client education as we walk through the dwelling and get to put a face with a name. There have been nearly 40 audits that have been started this year. This goes from visiting the home, obtaining the information needed and then entering the information in the computer program. From start to finish, it takes about 7 hours for each audit.

SALS has achieved three Energy Star 2.5 certifications on the homes at Hilltop. This is new innovative green building and we are pioneering the way for our county!!! This is because of an extended effort from our construction staff, YouthBuild students, countless volunteers, and professors from WVU, Bridgemont Community and Technical College, Appleblossum, the HVAC contractor (Economy Heating), Vickie and myself. I am so proud to be a part of all of this!!!

Vickie and I attended training in Morehead, Kentucky on the Energy Star 3 requirements which each new SALS home will have to meet. It was iffy as to if the training would be held or not due to the recent tornados that hit the area, the route was closed for a while, but we finally made it. Rowan County, Kentucky was a beautiful area!

There have been five new YouthBuild students go through the PACT classes and pass the quizzes---it is now up to each student to master the skill so that their supervisor can check off on that task and they will receive certification from the Home Builders Institute.

I have agreed and already registered to continue my service with SALS and look forward to serving another year with the great folks here.

Remember, as the temperatures get warmer --- use the fresh outside air and fans before you turn on the air conditioner and when you have to turn it on, set the thermostat at 72 degrees or greater for maximum energy savings.

Greetings from the New SALS VISTA

by Erica Horton

My name is Erica Horton and I am the new VISTA for the Historic Oak Hill School. I will be a part of the Community Development Team. I am not new to the VISTA program as I have served two previous terms as Education/Outreach Coordinator for a Watershed Organization in Mullens, WV (Wyoming County). I am a single mom of Erin (8 year old girl) and we are excited to re-locate to Fayette County. I look forward to meeting you and gaining ideas, tips, assistance and having fun. Thanks to those who are serving and have served over the years. I hope to add to the success of the many programs SALS offers.

YouthBuild & Save-Our-Streams Workshop

by Gary DeLuke

On the Monday of May 7th, one of our YouthBuild crews got a chance to spend time in the Beards Fork Stream with Glenn Nelson of the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection Non-Point Source program. Nelson explained a little about the WV Save-Our-Streams program, and then got right down to business. The YouthBuild students were able to learn about basic stream chemistry and commonly known facets of stream habitats. The most exciting activity, of course, was getting in the creek to catch critters. While reviewing our bounty after getting out of the water, we found several stoneflies, which are a strong indicator of a healthy stream, as they are extremely sensitive to changes in their environment. This, combined with the near-perfect acidity, dissolved oxygen, and alkalinity, let us know that Beards Fork is an exemplary tributary of the Loop Creek watershed.

SALS Journal



A "Little" Helper

by Debra Spurlock

The second Friday of every month I work at the SALS Community Center in Beards Fork. I fix twenty food boxes to distribute to families in our area who qualify under our FEMA Program. The last time I was there I had a visit from a past employee and friend, Brenda Winter. She brought along her granddaughter. Since I was busy making the boxes I asked them to come and talk to me while I made the boxes. Well, it went a step further than that. Her nineteen month old granddaughter, Hailey began helping me make the boxes. She made a point to put the cans in straight and neat in the boxes. She helped me complete about five boxes. I do believe that this is SALS youngest volunteer to date.

A Tribute to Jeff Mullins

by Debra Spurlock

SALS lost a very special person a few months ago, Jeff Mullins. Jeff had been associated with SALS for over ten years. He started out as a YouthBuild member. He worked on the job sites and attended Vo-Tech where he studied for his GED. He always got along with his fellow workers. He made many friends at SALS, friends of all ages. Two of those friends were my young daughter and me. At the time my daughter was about six years old. Jeff had a way with kids, and was so kind to my daughter. Over the years they became very close friends, and when

continued on page 14



Photos courtesy of SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN LABOR SCHOOL

More than 800 middle and high school volunteers from around the nation stay in Fayette and Kanawha counties during one of two summer camps the Southern Appalachian Labor School hosts in July.



Students remove porch planks during the summer of 2011. A crew of five students and one adult work on a home during the nearly five days they are in West Virginia for the workcamp.



The Southern Appalachian Labor School's summer workcamp spends about \$80,000 on lumber and paint, said SALS Housing Manager Debra Spurlock. Here, a student and staff member cut lumber during a project in 2011.

IF YOU NEED TO BUILD IT THEY WILL COME

Summer Campers Fix Needy Homes

by [Megan Workman](#)

Printed in Sunday Gazette-Mail April 13th, 2012

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Debra Spurlock and her husband were both out of work in 2000 but desperately needed a new roof on their home.

When a friend told Spurlock about a workcamp sponsored by the Southern Appalachian Labor School, she decided to sign up for the free home repairs offered by the group.

A week later, two groups of middle and high school volunteers had put a new roof on her Fayette County home.

Spurlock, who is now the housing manager for the Southern Appalachian Labor School, said student volunteers who worked on the roof have mailed her Christmas cards every year since.

"People sign up either because they don't have the money to do the repairs, they are someone who isn't able to do it themselves or they can't find anyone to do it for them. But one of the main reasons is that they want the company," Spurlock said. "The older folks like to have the people come because they get lonely and they look forward to these kids spending a week in their house. They keep in contact with them."

Most residents who receive free home repairs each year in Fayette and Kanawha counties are older and disabled, Spurlock said.

Workcamp volunteers have repaired homes in Fayette County for the past 15 years but added Kanawha County homes to the list last year.

The workcamps are a part of a larger program, Group Care, which is a nonprofit interdenominational Christian volunteer home repair organization based in Loveland, Colo. Locally, the Southern Appalachian Labor School [SALS] sponsors Group Care.

About 800 middle and high school volunteers come from across the nation to participate in one of the workcamps in each county. A group of five students and

one adult usually works on one home, but some repairs require two crews, Spurlock said.

From July 8-14, about 400 campers will stay in Fayette County at what is now called the Southern Appalachian Labor School's Historic Oak Hill School. The building is the former Oak Hill Elementary building.

The second camp, in Kanawha County, is from July 22 to 28. Another 400 campers will sleep at Riverside High School.

During both camps, students will sleep on cots in the classrooms, eat meals in the schools' cafeterias, and enjoy evening entertainment in the school buildings. The campers spend about five days in the Mountain State painting the inside and outside of homes, repairing porches, adding wheelchair-accessible ramps and sealing doors to make them air tight.

"The campers like to give back because they feel like they've been blessed with a lot and [want] to give to those less fortunate," Spurlock said. "They like to see different areas and also [come] for the experience. Also, it is a church-based [organization] so they feel like it's what they need to do."

On Wednesdays during the workcamp, the volunteers work a half-day so that they can spend the rest of the day enjoying West Virginia's sites, Spurlock said. They will go rafting and hiking during their free day, she said.

Students pay about \$35 each for the camp, which helps cover the cost of repair materials, Spurlock said. SALS matches the same amount the students contribute, she said. The group also fundraises quite a bit to support its budget.

Between the two camps, the SALS spends about \$80,000 on paint, lumber and other materials.

More than 1,500 West Virginia homes have benefited from the program.

There are currently more than 100 people registered to have their home fixed this summer, but Spurlock said the group is still accepting requests. To apply to receive assistance or to learn more about the workcamp, call Spurlock at 304-442-3328 or visit www.sals.info.

Reach Megan Workman at megan.work...@wvgazette.com or 304-348-5113.

SALS's Panel at ASA Conference

by John Flack

Every year, many people from inside and outside of Appalachia come together to learn and discuss issues and stories from the Appalachian Region at the Appalachian Studies Association Conference. This year the conference met in Indiana, Pennsylvania on the weekend of March 23rd, 2012. The Southern Appalachian Labor School presented a panel at the conference led by Jan Rezek of the SALS board. Our presentation was called, "Healthy Lifestyles, Sustainable Living: The Key to Educating our Youth about Nutrition and Healthy Living." Also presenting were John Flack, an Americorp VISTA with SALS, Kaitlyn Carreau, Americorp VISTA, and Lorien MacAuley, former SALS VISTA and current graduate student at Virginia Tech.

The panel was convened to discuss issues involving health in the youth of our area. It was divided into three different parts. Introducing the presentation to lay the foundation for our three programs, Jan started off by giving some background information about SALS and the needs for Fayette County. One was to discuss the food programs that SALS has held with kids during the after school program primarily headed by Kaitlyn. The second topic was discussed by John the types of physical activity that kids are engaged in and should be engaged in to maintain physical fitness. And finally, the importance of gardening and understanding where food comes from was presented by Lorien. These are all aspects meant to complement each other to help kids strive for a healthy way of living. In these three facets, we discussed our methods and results while trying to display the successes and the aspects that need improvement. With our results, we hope that we were able to give others some ideas about how to start and/or maintain a fruitful health program for children.

After a successful presentation, we were able to talk to many other people about the issues facing youth and share experiences from various areas around Appalachia. During the conference, we were also able to hear many new stories and learn about a number of issues throughout Appalachia. I hope that we were able to contribute and represent SALS and the people of our area well. On behalf of our panel, I would like to thank Jan for convening this for us and giving us this great opportunity to expand our understand of Appalachia. I would also like to thank SALS for providing us this opportunity as well. And last, but certainly not least, I would also like to extend our thanks to all those who have helped support us in our efforts to provide kids with a better understanding of their health.



Kaitlyn Carreau, John Flack, and Lorien MacAuley, (former SALS VISTA) at the ACA Conference in March

From Midwife to Public Speaker to Writer

by Dorothy Rudy

These past six months have been a very different period from the previous 2 ½ years at Southern Appalachian Labor School. In many ways, I have worked hard but can't feel much has been accomplished, while some of the time has been 'very interesting' and, in some ways, funny.

We received a call from one of our older students in a panic on Groundhog's Day that she had found a newborn English Setter pup in her driveway and that the mother dog was having her first litter of pups. Our student was the only one home at the time – and would be for several hours. "What should I do?" was her anguished cry. That day, I became midwife, 'assisting' in the delivery of 5 healthy pups, 2 of which were born simultaneously. Momma was great! Could and should have bitten me, since she didn't know me from a hole in the ground, but she seemed to sense I was there to help and support her and her young teenaged owner.

Kaitlyn Carreau and I have participated in an extensive grant writing Webinar and I have used this to respond to a 21st Century Accent Education RFP for five years beginning, if funded, this fall.

Most of this period, however, has been one of research and setting meetings with local civic and fraternal organizations as well as individuals in the Oak Hill area to help the members/citizenry understand all the great things SALS does for the citizens of Fayette County. I present

the SALS story and organization. My 'one minute elevator pitch' obviously has been expanded. My real agenda is recruiting volunteers for our various programs here at Beards Fork.

As I met with these groups, I am astounded by how little the citizens of Fayette County really know about SALS and what we do, and often this breeds hostility due to misunderstandings. Some know a little about this, while others know a little about that, but so much of what is 'known' is either incomplete or incorrect. For example, SALS built a subdivision of new homes nearly 15 years ago in the Page Bottom section of Page, where I have owned a home for 14 years. All are occupied and have been since construction. Yet it seems there are many people who believe these homes have sat empty for all this time. and are in disbelief when I tell them there is a list of families waiting for a home to become available. SALS could probably rent out at least three times as many homes as we have. In addition, people may know SALS renovates homes but they don't know we build homes, such as the great Energy Star homes in a new subdivision in Hilltop and homes elsewhere. I say, "When SALS builds new homes we also must be able to sell them." People don't know that Debbie Spurlock, as a certified housing counselor, and SALS, as a HUD-approved Housing Counseling Agency, enable low-income people to get their finances in order and purchase these homes.

Something else most people don't realize: approximately 30 % of the youth in Fayette County do not graduate from high school (based on 9th grade enrollment) and don't pursue their GEDs, making it extremely difficult to support themselves or their future families. They also tend to be computer-illiterate. They may be able to use Facebook and e-mail, but little else, so applying for work is often impossible, since most applications are completed online. These youth don't meet the prospective employers' hiring criteria either. Thus, I also introduce the YouthBuild organization, in the hope the word will spread to those who need. Our YouthBuild organization enables them to "Earn While They Learn". With YouthBuild, they would achieve their GEDs and learn a trade in home construction at the same time, improving their sense of self-esteem.

SALS AfterSchool Program Congratulates Graduates

This Spring SALS is pleased to announce the graduation of four of our former students. **Mercedes Newkirk** graduated from Fairmont State with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Advertising and Interior Design. She plans to begin work in this field this summer. Mercedes is the daughter of Charlene Newkirk, SALS' AfterSchool Coordinator, and the late Tony Newkirk of Beards Fork.

SALS Journal

While Mercedes was completing her work, **Samantha Hamm**, was finishing her Bachelor of Science degree at Marshall University with a triple major – Chemistry, Biology, and Psychology. Samantha is the daughter of Jennifer Hamm and the late Charles Hamm, Jr. of Beards Fork.

Oak Hill High School will begin next school year minus one of its track stars. **Haley Martin**, who ranked 2nd in the State in the 100 meter dash, **graduated** and will continue her studies at Fairmont State College in the Fall, majoring in Sports Medicine. She is the daughter of Latoya Martin, one of SALS' AfterSchool tutors, and Russell Ray, Jr. of North Page.

Chelsea Spurlock, is the daughter of Carlos and Debbie Spurlock of Beards Fork. Debbie is SALS' Home Buyer Education Counselor. Chelsea graduated from Valley High School. While part of the AfterSchool/Energy Express Program, Chelsea completed every Energy Express program between kindergarten and grade 5 without ever missing a day. Chelsea's plans for the coming year have not determined at press time.

SALS congratulates these graduates and wishes them success as they begin the next facets of their life ahead.

Zumba with Us at Beards Fork

by Dorothy Rudy

A Zumba class has recently been organized at the SALS Community Center at Beards Fork. Over 20 people in the community have joined the class. We range in age from middle schoolers to citizens in our 70s! Classes are held 3 times per week in the Board Room. Mercedes Newkirk has been leading our charge as we dance, wiggle, stretch, and work to tone up and lose weight.

Come join us at 7:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays at the SALS Community Center at Beards Fork.

Energy Express Promotes Summer Reading

by Vickie Mullins

Energy Express is an eight-week summer reading, nutrition program sponsored by West Virginia University and hosted by SALS at the SALS Community Center in Beards Fork. This program is designed to help promote children's reading skills or keep them up during the summer when children tend to fall behind. The AmeriCorps members are their mentors and we have five classrooms with 8 children in each, a total of 40 kids. We also have

Continued on page 14

Community Gardens Expand

by Kaitlyn Carreau

We are in another exciting gardening season here at SALS. Youth in the after school program are growing tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, and other vegetables and tending the garden. Volunteers from several colleges generously helped prep the raised beds in Beards Fork and Oak Hill while on their spring breaks. We are very grateful for their time and support; we could not have done it without their help. Several community members have adopted beds in the Beards Fork garden, and will be planting and tending these beds over the growing season. In addition, we are busy working to expand the gardens at the Historic Oak Hill School in order to provide more space for community members to grow their own produce. The Montgomery community garden, which SALS has helped with in the past, has really taken off. Additional raised beds have been added to the existing site across from the Montgomery General Hospital, and the Montgomery community garden network has also expanded to include a new site at the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. These expansions have been made possible thanks to the Morris Creek Watershed Association, the Montgomery Park Board, the WVU Tech Technology Club, Lowes, and numerous committed volunteers.



after school program students work in the high tunnel

SALS Journal

New Program Cooking up at the SALS After School Program

by Kaitlyn Carreau

The SALS afterschool program in Beards Fork has been integrating healthy cooking lessons into its gardening program. Youth have prepared healthy snacks such as fruit smoothies, sweet potato crisps, hummus, and vegetable quesadillas. The students have helped in many ways such as washing fruits and vegetables, peeling and grating, measuring ingredients, and lending a hand mixing. These lessons are designed to emphasize fruits and vegetables, and expose the students to foods they may never have tasted before. We have been integrating produce the students have grown in the garden, and we look forward to trying more seasonal recipes as the growing season progresses!

SALS enters Communities Take Root program

by Kaitlyn Carreau

The Southern Appalachian Labor School has entered the 2012 Communities Take Root program. In this program, made possible through a collaboration between Edy's Fruit Bars and the Fruit Tree Planting Foundation, communities across the nation campaign for votes to win a fruit tree orchard. The 17 organizations who obtain the most votes will receive fruit trees and assistance planting the trees. Voting begins April 16 and continues until August 31. Visit www.CommunitiesTakeRoot.com to learn about all the communities and cast your vote. Each person is able to vote once per day, every day, so your help would be appreciated! If we are one of the top 17 organizations, the fruit trees would be planted at the SALS Community Center in Beards Fork, where the fruit would be enjoyed by students in the after school program and community members!

Youth Mentoring Report

by Gary DeLuke

As I started my third AmeriCorps VISTA term in October of 2011 I have enjoyed a shift from primarily community gardening and agriculture education to working more closely with the SALS YouthBuild and AmeriCorps members. Throughout the Fall and Winter of 2011, I conducted current events and social studies discussions during the short breaks on our construction sites. We were able to talk about current economic policies, civil rights issues (in-

cluding Dr. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and the Black Panther Party), impacts of industry in Appalachia, and we even watched President Obama's State of the Union Address (as well as the Republican response).

Beginning early this year, I began helping some of our YouthBuild students work toward getting their GEDs. I go to the Fayette Institute of Technology at 2:00pm, Monday through Thursday most weeks, and pick up where the Adult Learning Center leaves off. Sometimes we work on basic math skills, but most of our time is spent working on reading and writing skills. It seems like everything else improves once a student's literacy improves. So far, Kenneth Elmore and David Buckholtz have obtained their GEDs.

A Visit to Essar Materials

by Andrew Munn

Three residents of the Loop and Laurel Creek area of Fayette County paid a surprise visit to Essar Minerals, the corporate owner of Frasure Creek Mining in Scotts Depot this Spring. Kathryn South of Beards Fork, Vickie Shelton of Wriston and Andrew Munn of Beckwith and with the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition represented the concerns of people living below Frasure Creek's active and proposed strip mining operations.

"We want to prevent damages to our property, to health, and water resources. We would like for the company to put up bonds at the least, so that there will be money available to repair any damages to peoples' property and water source from their mining," said South. She further expressed her concern that strip mining would eventually decimate the community. "The folks in Beards Fork are such a tight-knit community and the thought of it being no longer there is such a depressing thought. Everything has already been taken from them. The only thing left to take from them is the community itself."

South, Shelton and Munn met with Doug Blackburn, president of Frasure Creek Mining and a former manager of Massey subsidiaries in Boone County including Elk Run. Kathryn South expressed concerns regarding property damage that has occurred from blasting, flooding and fears of future property damage.

Residents invited Blackburn to come and see first-hand the impacts of Frasure Creek's strip mine in their communities. Blackburn accepted the invitation. Said Shelton, "He said he wants the company to be a good neighbor. In my mind, a good neighbor does not destroy peoples' property. I think its great if he follows through on meeting with the community, if he actually listens to what people have to say."

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Leveling our mountains for greed,

Update on Sister Elizabeth

Dear John David,

March 1, 2012

Sister Elizabeth Hillmann recently received your latest mailing, for which she is very grateful, as always. She asked me to let you know that, interested as she is, she is unable to respond at present because she has been in rehab since early December with broken bones, and is currently nursing a broken thumb.

At the age of 90, she is showing signs of the wear and tear of a very dedicated and fruitful life of service. Her short term memory has faded a great deal, though she remembers vividly many people and events of her earlier life, including that spent in West Virginia. Her balance is so precarious that we are no longer capable of keeping her safe at home; so arrangements are being made to secure a room for her in a Catholic nursing home in Chicago, near our headquarters there. We expect that as soon as one becomes available she will leave Gainesville.

If you would like her next address, I should be happy to send it as soon as she is settled. Knowing that I too, having served in Ansted for three years, and then in Charleston, share those concerns. She often shared your communications with me. I know that she remains intensely interested in your work and in the issues that you and she both consider very important. We both wish you success as you move forward with your efforts.

Cordially, Sister Betty Rodgers, r.c.

Editor's note: Sister Elizabeth served as our SALS board Chair for many, many years as part of her tireless service to residents of the upper Kanawha Valley.

Juneteenth, continued from page one

dants of former slaves making an annual pilgrimage back to Galveston on this date. In the beginning, the white citizens of Texas took offense to the holiday and tried to block its occurrence. In the early years, little interest existed outside the African American community in participation in the celebrations. Eventually, as African Americans became land owners, land was donated and dedicated for these festivities. On January 1, 1980, Juneteenth became an official state holiday in Texas.

Today, Juneteenth is enjoying a rapid growth in communities and organizations throughout the country. The Smithsonian, the Henry Ford Museum and others, sponsor Juneteenth-centered activities. Juneteenth celebrates African American freedom and achievement, while encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures. The events of 1865 in Texas are not forgotten and a national day of pride in our diversity has emerged.

Energy Express, continued from page 11

adult and teen volunteers daily to read one to one. The children receive two meals a day, family style, which teaches them a family sitting.

The AmeriCorp members receive a living allowance and an education award. They also have to complete 300 community service hours. The children get to experience a week of exciting books that relate to communities, home place, their selves, our world, and the future. They also take home a book on Fridays. They do a lot of work with construction paper, paint, glue, and participate in considerable reading. The program has made a difference in their lives during the summer by keeping their minds active, alert, and making sure once they go back to school, they have not dropped too far behind.

Drop by this summer and be a part of a fabulous program where children get to express their feelings through art, drama, reading and writing! Volunteer ----- it makes your community a better place!



State Delegate Perry (R) & Senator William Laird (L) with YouthBuild Graduates / Jody Deane/ Swayde Thomas/ Justin Pence/ David Buckholtz & daughter

SALS Journal

Jeff, continued from page seven

he was away they wrote to each other frequently. As most of you know, being a teenager can come with many complications, and he helped her through some tough spots in her life. When there were things that she didn't want to talk to her parents about, Jeff was there for her. He helped her deal with things that he had already been through. In turn she helped him through a rough spot in his life. She wrote him letters of encouragement. As someone once said, she made him feel like a somebody, when the world was telling him he was a nobody. When he would come back to SALS she would always go visit him and spend time with him.

Just when it seemed things were going well he had to go away again, but once again they communicated by mail. Even though she had a steady boyfriend and was busy with being a senior in high school, she still made time to write. He continued to write back, sending her Christmas cards, valentine cards, etc. They both counted the days till he would be back again. This time was different. Jeff had grown into a responsible young man. He was always willing to help anyone at a moment's notice. It seemed as if he had found his purpose in life. In a flash, that life was taken away, leaving many people asking why and leaving many people grieving.

SALS was Jeff's home. The SALS family was Jeff's family. Jeff had one very special person to look after him. Artie Mullins was that person. He saw something in Jeff that many people didn't. He saw that Jeff had a good heart and just needed someone to lend him a helping hand. Artie gave him that helping hand. Through Artie's help and guidance, Jeff became an important player in the SALS team. He helped out with the afterschool program, he assisted with the volunteers, even attending all orientations and speaking to the groups, and he was always there to help unload the food truck and carry stuff to the car for you. He was willing to do anything he could to help. He always had a contagious smile on his face. We will all miss seeing that smiling face. Jeff may be gone, but he will NEVER be forgotten.



Historic Oak Hill School/front lawn/graduates & families

Southern Appalachian Labor School - Who We Are

www.sals.info

SALS Community Center in Beards Fork

304-779-2772/ph/fax or 779-2280 or 578-5057

SALS Historic Oak Hill School

304-465-4246 phone/fax

WVU-Tech office: 304-442-3156

or 442-3042 or fax only 442-3285

Debbie Spurlock, Housing Counseling: 304-442-3328

Vickie Smith, Const. : 304-640-3792, fax 469-9721

John David, Director - 304-442-3156

Joyce Brown, Program Support/Counselor

- 304-442-3328

Ruth Lanham, Admin. Assistant - 304-442-3156

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Dave Shaver
Linda Dillard
Jimmy Adkins
Terry Black
Ron Yellets

Youth Build Trainer
Custodian
YouthBuild Trainer
YouthBuild Trainer
YouthBuild Trainer

AmeriCorps/VISTA

Alisha Young	Youth Alumni Representative
Gary DeLuke	AmeriCorps/VISTA
Barbara Painter	AmeriCorps/VISTA
Kaitlyn Carreau	AmeriCorps/VISTA
Dorothy Rudy	AmeriCorps/VISTA
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Robert Murphy	AmeriCorps
Hope Campbell	Summer VISTA

'Accent Education' After School Program

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Tony Canada	Project Director
Regina Gilbert	Experience Works
Latoya Ray	Teacher
Wilda Salter	Foster Grandparent
Mrs. Michaeleen Dorsey	Foster Grandparent

Energy Express

Nikki Lucas, Site Supervisor

Environmental Health Clinic Project

Dr. Dan Doyle, M.D.

G.E.D. Instructors/Fayette Co. Schools

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