



SALS JOURNAL

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Gimme Shelter: from Repairs to Ownership

Summertime again brings around Group Work-Camps. Many hundreds of volunteers from across the United States will invade, repair and go off into the sunset with the satisfaction of knowing they made a difference in someone's life.

What may be just a coat of paint to some of us is very important to others. A wheelchair ramp is sometimes the only thing keeping an elderly person from going home after being in a nursing home. If you see a group from Group WorkCamps working on repairing a house stop by to say hello, thank them for coming, or even volunteer to help. They are taking time out of their summer to come here. Make them feel welcome and let them know they are appreciated.

We have also been renting some apartments in Gauley Bridge. The Regina Apartments are not all completed but SALS has been working to repair and provide safe housing there for low income families. Soon the job will be finished and more people will have a safe neighborhood to call home.

Our Homebuyers Education classes are going well. We have held several group sessions and even had a one on one class, which we are happy to report resulted in home ownership. That's right, one of our low income families has qualified and bought one of SALS energy efficient homes. We are all very excited for this young couple. They are expecting their first baby this year and will bring their child home to a new house in a good neighborhood. So congratulations to the new homeowners. We are proud of the part we played in making this happen.

There are still two newly completed Energy Star homes available in Oak Hill. So give us a call and you may be the next homeowner. We will do all we can to make it happen!

22nd Solidarity Festival June 15th

SALS will host its 22nd annual Juneteenth Solidarity Festival at the Historic Oak Hill School on Saturday, June 15th.

The event will begin at 12:00 and feature music, a cruise in car show, book sale, food, various informational booths, games, historical displays, and more for the entire afternoon. Admission is free. The performances schedule will be posted on Facebook (Southern Appalachian Labor School) or call 304.465.4246/304.779.2772.

Returning after several years will be Jude Binder, well known at FESTIVALL and throughout the state for interpretive masked dance as well as singer-songwriters Elaine Purkey, Nancy Clark and other well known performers.

New this year will be the gigantic 1st Annual New River/SALS Book Sale. Thousands of donated books will be available for bargain prices. The book sale will be inside and open 9AM-5PM. Proceeds will benefit SALS in its various human needs programs.

Also on display will be fly-over photographs of Mountain-Top removal in Fayette County, tours of the renovated first floor area of the SALS Historic Oak Hill School, and a silent auction of valuable items.

The event will also feature a cruise in car show where a trophy will be given for the "Best in Show." The Fayette County Humane Society will have dogs and cats available for adoption. Flea Market and vendors are welcome at \$20.00 a space. Various information tables such as Experience Works will be set up around the campus. The newly renovated Historic School Café will be open for refreshments.

The New River Community and Technical College will be setting up the "House of Pressure" to show exactly where home heating loss is located in winter, cooling loss occurs in the summer, and how to change habits to lower utility bills. King Coal Chevrolet will display its Volt, a highly acclaimed hybrid car. The campus playground will be available for children.

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Economic Violence is Legal

by John David, from *Charleston Gazette*, April 19, 2013

April 1 is important for coal miners and working people. As negotiated decades ago, April 1 is a holiday in the United Mine Workers contract honoring the eight-hour day -- first established on April 1, 1898, by the Illinois Miners' Union following a nine-month strike.

April is also the season for Passover and Easter. The spirit of Passover focuses on the tyranny of oppressors and the spirit of Easter, as noted by the late Algeron Black of the American Ethical Union, "is a power in people, a will to overcome not merely for one's own immediate sake and regardless of others. It is a power of regeneration which can and must be shared and become the basis for the new way of seeing, and the changing of conditions so that we can save life and liberate the creative potentials in human beings."

For these reasons if not more, April 1, 2013, was an appropriate time to stage in Charleston one of the largest labor rallies in recent decades. It focused on the Chapter 11 bankruptcy of Patriot Coal that will rob thousands of coal miners of their promised benefits in the promised land.

Patriot, created by Peabody to shed itself of union-negotiated benefits, also bought Magnum Coal. Magnum was created by Arch Coal in a similar maneuver, thereby conveniently leaving Patriot with a total of \$1.6 billion in health and retirement benefits for more than 20,000 miners and their families. Interestingly, 90 percent of those on Patriot's list worked only for Peabody and Arch.

While Patriot now seeks to rid itself of proclaimed "unsustainable legacy liabilities," it has asked the bankruptcy court to approve \$7 million in executive bonuses and attorney fees of more than twice that amount. The wound is salted further, as noted in a *Charleston Gazette* piece by Paul Nyden, because Patriot also seeks termination of promised benefits to more than 1,000 current and retired salaried employees.

The use of bankruptcy to void contractual obligations to workers is not a new legal tactic. Particularly since passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, millions of American workers who made this nation an industrial power and fought with honor in numerous wars have become victims of economic violence, preventing them from meeting their basic needs.

This economic violence, while not moral, is outrageously legal, since it is an outcome of management techniques, government policy and legal maneuvers, all within the rules, regulations and procedures of our current economic system.

It is not difficult to list legal activities that were forms of violence in the wasted lives that are the norm in West Virginia. One can count deaths from numerous mine explosions, death and disability from black lung, and deaths caused by drilling the Hawks Nest Tunnel through silica,

just to name a few examples.

Both Massey Energy (now Alpha), which has the Upper Big Branch legacy, and the International Coal Group, which has the Sago legacy, eagerly bought coal mines at bankruptcy court to avoid labor agreements.

The pattern has also been national. Over the past decades, former airlines like Continental and Eastern went bankrupt to break labor contracts. Manville Corporation declared bankruptcy, even while profitable, to avoid pending lawsuits by victims of asbestosis and lung cancer. Firms with well-known brands like Swift, Wilson, and International Baking (Twinkies) went bankrupt to re-package their brands union-free and/or negotiate major labor concessions.

Unionized coal companies closed or re-organized to set up new firms that were destined to fail, like Patriot, or become non-union, using the legal business arena to claim the new firms are separate while in fact working with them to maintain markets and access to capital.

This kind of economic violence eventually leads to a reaction in its victims. People are told to adjust, tighten their belts, or move somewhere else. But there is a limit to sacrifice. Belts can only be tightened so much, and it is obvious that those who control the economy aren't sharing in the sacrifice.

In essence, what is going on is that, over the past decades, miners have been stripped of effective means to protect their livelihoods and living standards. West Virginians are law-abiding people - more so than anywhere else in the United States, as shown by available crime statistics. But that does not mean they can or will peacefully accept economic violence that destroys their lives and threatens those of their children.

Perpetrators of economic violence, proclaiming themselves as "Friends," are well protected and get off scot-free. After all, their crimes are simply "good business." In the meantime, millions of people are destined for the scrap heap to waste away in desperate suffering and bitter hate that threatens survival and leads toward civil strife.

At the Patriot rally, UMWA President Cecil Roberts referred to various wise words of Mother Jones, who also predicted that there will never be peace in West Virginia until there is justice. Thousands who came to the Civic Center on April 1 and 16 who were arrested for sitting on steps of Laidley Tower took giant steps in walking that talk. Take it from those there, this is not the end; it is only the beginning.

The SALS Journal is published by the Southern Appalachian Labor School, a grassroots non-profit organization dedicated to social & environmental justice and workers rights. We welcome articles and submissions by our readers. Send to: Gary R. Zuckett, Editor, SALS Journal, POB 127 Kincaid, WV 25119. Phone 304-779-2772 www.sals.info United Assoc. of Labor Education

Judge Gives Patriot Coal OK to Cut Benefits

by Paul J. Nyden, Charleston Gazette, May 29, 2013

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- A federal bankruptcy judge in St. Louis ruled Wednesday that Patriot Coal can cut health benefits for retired coal miners and their spouses as part of a plan for the company to emerge from bankruptcy.

In her ruling, U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Kathy A. Surratt-States said that Patriot can throw out contracts negotiated with the United Mine Workers of America, and move current "retiree health care to the UMWA Retiree Healthcare Trust, which shall be structured as a Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association."

The ruling specifically approved Patriot's "motion to reject collective bargaining agreements and to modify retiree benefits."

The Surratt-States ruling will allow Patriot to make changes to benefits for both working and retired miners under existing contracts. It will allow Patriot to adjust wages and benefits, as well as "work rules for union employees to a level consistent with the regional labor market," according to a statement from the company.

The UMWA had argued Patriot Coal was created in October 2007 to hire all union workers who previously worked for Peabody Energy and Arch Coal east of the Mississippi River. The new company assumed responsibility for the health insurance of union miners who had already retired from Peabody and Arch.

Patriot filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in July 2012. UMWA officials have consistently said Patriot was designed to fail.

Patriot officials, as well as officials from Peabody and Arch, have denied that claim. Company officials have said Patriot cannot emerge from bankruptcy unless miners and retirees accept cuts to their health benefits.

In her opinion, Surratt-States asks, "Was Debtor Patriot Coal Corporation created to fail? Maybe not. Maybe."

Patriot's executives, she wrote, may have "thought the liabilities were manageable." She also noted that while "unions generally try to bargain for the best deal of their members ... there is likely some responsibility to be absorbed for demanding benefits that the employer cannot realistically fund in perpetuity."

UMWA President Cecil Roberts said the union would appeal Wednesday's ruling to U.S. District Court. Roberts called Wednesday's ruling "wrong, unfair and fails to fully recognize the coming wave of human suffering that will be experienced by thousands of people throughout the coalfields."

"As often happens under American bankruptcy law, the short-term interests of the company are valued more than the dedication and sacrifice of the workers, who actually produce the profits that make a company successful," Roberts said.

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Tens of thousands of Miners from across the nation (and community supporters) rallied on April 1st in Charleston to protest Patriot Coal's attempt to break union contracts and eliminate retiree's benefits

Directors Report

John P. David

Thanks to a grant from the Benedum Foundation, SALS was able to secure the services of Collective Impact to prepare a long-term strategic plan. More information will be forthcoming as we review and implement the recommendations. Basically, the report is timely since it is apparent that a new organizational phase is required if we are to survive with a new face as a sustainable social enterprise.

The past six months have witnessed interesting times across the board. Others are writing about our major vehicle accident and other events. In many ways, we are fortunate that the situations were dealt with well because outcomes could have been much worse.

Program wise, we are fortunate to still be moving forward on various housing fronts. Both the Appalachian Service Project and Group Cares will be with us this summer, along with Global Volunteers, faith-based entities, and Boy Scouts from the National Jamboree.

It is no surprise that funding is a critical issue for SALS. This has made it more difficult because those we serve expect more as conditions deteriorate. We are exploring new options with the Historic Oak Hill School and new initiatives.

We are pleased that the Raleigh County Housing Authority has agreed to implement a Homeownership Voucher Program through which qualified holders (current and new) of Housing Choice Vouchers can participate in a homeownership program. The program will cover the multi-county area served by the Raleigh County Housing

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YouthBuild News

by Kathryn South/Artie Mullins

SALS YouthBuild has had a long winter with lots of activities going on at various sites. We finally completed our YouthBuild Evaluation Study with MDRC. The youth who we brought into the program during that time frame, from last March until December, have been learning the particulars of the program by going to GED classes and doing the "Working Mind Working Hands" program along with other construction training. Some have left and some have hung in there to complete the program.

We have brought several new folks into the program since the study was completed. We hope that the effort that the YouthBuild programs all over the country makes a big impact and can prove to Congress and to other funders the importance of this valuable youth program. We try to serve the youth who have tried other avenues without any success. Every young person has an opportunity and has a story and something to offer if folks would just give him or her a chance, and, yes, they will keep making the same mistakes, but don't we all fail sometimes to reach our goals? Two youth have taken the GED test; one passed parts and the other youth had to go back and write more for his essay, but he passed, GREAT!!! Harley Waddell, passed the GED on the first try. We knew you could do it Harley. Levi Vestal passed parts of his test and needs to take the remaining parts to pass.

Barb Painter has been working with bringing in other job related trainings. Four youth took parts of the CHERP training. Two youth finished the course, Kayla Buchanan and Swayde Thomas. Adam Davis also took parts of the course. The Bricklayers Association brought in a representative to discuss apprenticeship in the Bricklayers field. Thirty youth participated in the training and was very interested in the program. We will have another session in a few months.

We are very proud of our two youth who participated in the YouthBuild Youth Caucus in DC in late March. Swayde Thomas and Adam Davis, our representatives at the youth conference, were very glad that they were able to go to DC to meet other youth from YouthBuild sites all over the country. Both young people want to go back to the same conference next year. We did get some great comments from the YouthBuild USA folks about our youth who went to DC, so thank you Swayde and Adam! By the way, Swayde is a proud new father of a six month old daughter.

We are very proud of our youth who spoke up about needing more YouthBuild programs in WV to serve out of school youth who need job skills training. The youth were part of the forum on Children and Poverty that took



Youth cleanup stream near Beards Fork community center

place at the Historical Oak Hill School in March. Over 100 people attended the forum and folks had lots to say to the Senators who listened to how they could take what information they had back to Charleston. We want to thank Senators Laird and Miller for having the forum in Oak Hill at our facility. We trust that they will do all they can to try to improve conditions for people in WV.

We will be hosting lots of volunteers this spring and summer from Appalachian Service Project out of Tennessee and Group Cares, formerly Group Workcamps from Colorado. Fayette and Kanawha counties will have lots of folks running around the area for a few weeks doing a lot of good work for people who need some home repairs.

Construction Report

by Vickie Smith, construction manager

We have three new homes ready to go to new homeowners this year. Two of these homes are "Energy Star 3". They are located in the city limits of Oak Hill with nice flat yards. As always we furnish major appliances. These three homes move us closer to compliance under our CHDO grants.

We have completed three rehabilitations in Fayette County and completed 8 units at the Gauley River Garden Apartment complex (Regina). We are currently working on three new rehabs that will take some time to complete. With our loss of funding, the amount of work we can do has drastically changed from years past. We had typically worked on homes that were turned down by other entities and were able to make the necessary repairs. We now have to join the choir turning down homes and only take homes that need a couple of major items. And of course this will hurt those that have most need.

The Historic Oak Hill School is ready for a mass of volunteers who will be housed there for the entire summer. Extra staff will be needed to accomplish this, for example cooks etc. We have managed to buy enough used equipment and get the kitchen up and running. We also have received donated items and spent long hours gathering items needed to make the facility functional.

The Historic Oak Hill School has become a hub that stays busy and we have walk-ins all day for services. We also have other organizations that have a interest in the use of the facility. We have hosted many events there over the past 9 months.

We will also have in the mix the many other volunteers that will be staying at the SALS Community Center in Beards Fork. Thus, four people will have their hands full 8-9 hours a day. We also are responsible for many lots and over five acres of ground at the Historic Oak Hill School in downtown Oak Hill to keep mowed and trimmed all summer.

Tax credits are being worked on for supplies needed for the SALS Community Center in Beards Fork as it is in need of a roof. If all goes well we will be able to roof it with donated materials and volunteers to install it.

Historic Oak Hill School

by Erica Horton (VISTA)

As I serve as a VISTA I see changed happening all around me. Young adults are busy working on getting the site ready to be a community center. We have folks who rent rooms on our first floor. In the spring we are expecting On Pointe Dance Academy and Experience Works has an office here with three people placed with SALS through them. Senators Bill Laird and Ron Miller have an office here as well.



Fayette Institute of Technology graduation ceremony for Practical Nurses at the Historic Oak Hill School

As the months have passed we have hosted many events and meetings. Our crowing moment was when the Senators used our facility for a community meeting to discuss the effects of child poverty and to listen to those that see it and are affected by it. How wonderful it was to see a standing room only crowd in our dining hall.

We have held events like Breakfast with Santa, 1st Annual Craft Show, Joe Ailleo Basketball practice, 4H meetings, Girl Scout meetings, Baby shower, community meetings to discuss the effects of strip mining and our monthly food pantry.

We have received volunteers from other states and our own community. What a great way to show folks in the area what we are all about. Our YouthBuild members are hard at work with re-habs in the area.

I have been involved with monthly trainings from Step By Step that helps me be able to serve the community better. We have a story to tell and I am glad to be a part of it. SALS does a lot in our community and I want to help promote that.

Green VISTA Report

by Barb Painter

My greatest moment at this time is that I have applied and been accepted to serve my 4th (fourth) year here at SALS as a VISTA volunteer. My new time began on April 9, 2013. I enjoy working with all at SALS and with the YouthBuild students.

Since I have been certified to teach the PACT (Pre-apprenticeship Certification Training) 85 YouthBuild students have been trained and received their certification from the Home Builders Institute.

We have had several outside trainers in this year to train the YouthBuild, such as Bridgett Scruggs from Workforce WV to train on Job Readiness. A class also occurred to help the YouthBuild students to go through an actual job interview. Twanna Warner from the Women's Resource Center joined us to do a class on Suicide Prevention and Bullying. The group of college students from Maine also set in on this class. Phil was here from the Fayette County Health Department and did a food handler's class. Seven (7) of our staff passed the test and received their food handlers card. Also, while Phil was here conducting the food handler's class, he visited our kitchen because he wanted to take pictures to use in his class to show class members how an approved kitchen looks. He said he wanted good pictures as well as bad ones. This made us proud here at the Historic Oak Hill

School. Classes are being planned for later in the spring for Family Planning and Matt Wender from the County Commission will be here to explain county government to the youth.

I have made several contacts to conduct an OSHA 10 class at our facility for the YouthBuild students and staff, free of charge hopefully!

I acted as liaison between a gentleman in North Carolina who was looking for a good weatherization worker and Steve Dosch (VISTA Coordinator at YouthBuild USA) to obtain contact information for the WIPP (Weatherization Innovative Pilot Program) project in Southern Virginia. Hopefully one young man found permanent employment in a new field.

We have been very active with the Mountaineer Food Bank, serving at least 78 families per month. Included in these families are our own YouthBuild families.

I have been working with the Appalachia Service Project; this is the group that will be staying at the Historic Oak Hill School this summer for 8 weeks with a work camp project assisting persons in, Fayette County. I rode with two of their team members, showing them the county, and where some of their jobs were. They will be completing some of our rehab jobs to assist us.

I wrote a grant proposal to the West Virginia American Water Company to obtain funding for a prescription drug take back day in the Beard's Fork-Robson area. We got the grant approved!

I mailed letters to all of our local hospitals and hotels and motels for donations of bedding supplies and linens to assist local families who are burned out. So far, we have heard from three of these institutions with donations.



Barb Painter at the SALS food pantry for needy families

I spoke with Chris Cato who works with the Weatherization Innovative Pilot Program about not being included with the state Weatherization Training. A letter has been written to the WV State Weatherization Program requesting that SALS also be included in any state wide training offered.

I attended the Raleigh County Home Show and made contact with several vendors. I also talked with the New River Community and Technical College. They now have a "smart house" even with a blower door. We will be making plans for the college to share their technology with the YouthBuild students.

I gave a presentation at the Senate Select Committee Hearing on Poverty and Child Hunger, presenting a picture of a young child that was very hungry, asking us for an apple. As I told the Senators, a picture is worth a thousand words.

I continue to work with the Weatherization Innovative Pilot Program. During this quarter, 10 dwellings were reported as completed.

The Never Ending School

Charlene Newkirk, "Accent Education" Coordinator

The After School program has been very successful this school year. The students worked very hard on their work and received good grades. Some of the activities that the children in our after school program have been participating in was our Kids and Family Day at the Legislature. Due to the weather and snow days the students were not able to participate this year, but I was able to set up a display of the After School Program. One of Senator Jay Rockefeller's representatives stopped by our table and gave us a DVD of Senator Rockefeller reading a Dr. Seuss story which we played for the kids on Dr. Seuss birthday and made hats like "the cat" from the stories.

Mrs. Rudy, Kim, Linda, and myself helped the students set up the aquarium in the dining room for the Trout In The Classroom Project. The trout eggs will arrive in October. We have been testing the Beards Fork creek water with Trout Unlimited throughout the growing process of the trout to ensure the trout will be able to live in the creek. We've been doing crafts and science projects with NASA. I was able to talk about child poverty before the Senate Hearing at the SALS Historic Oak Hill School. Shortly after that we decided to have a "Small simple meal and rd quo; that is what we call brown bag meal that the kids could take home on Thursday so they can have something to eat while they aren't able to eat at the public school or with our after school program.

Black Lung Associations & Clinics Work to Help Miners Obtain Benefits

by *Deborah Willis*

Fayette County Black Lung Association leadership and members helped start the Nicholas County Black Lung Association last fall. We have had good attendance at both meetings. Fayette County Black Lung Association meets on the third Tuesday of each month at the New River Family Health Care Annex in Whipple. The meeting starts at 6 p.m. but black lung benefits counselors from three clinics and one attorney come to the Annex at 4 to provide members with assistance on their claims. The Nicholas County Black Lung Association meets the fourth Thursday of each month at 4. They also have three benefits counselors and an attorney who meet with the miners to help file and process claims.

There are two other chapters of the National Black Lung Association in West Virginia. The Mercer County Association is the newest and has met for the past year. Benefits counselors from Bluestone Health Association assist them. Tug River Black Lung Association in Wyoming County is also assisted by the black lung clinic at Tug River Health Association.

We often discuss the process and try to educate ourselves and other miners on how to win claims. The late Senator Robert C. Byrd gave us the last useful legislative change as part of the Affordable Care Act, often called ObamaCare. There were two provisions in the ACA to help miners and widows. The first provision provides automatic transfer of benefits to widows of miners who were receiving benefits at the time of their death. Prior to this change, widows not only had to again prove the miner had black lung and was totally disabled by the disease, but also prove that black lung contributed to the cause of the miner's death. Additionally, the legislation gave miners who had worked for 15 or more years in the mines and were totally disabled from a respiratory condition a presumption that the disabling disease arose from their coal mine employment. This was very important to miners who had previously smoked or who had heart disease.

In March, representatives from all WV Black Lung Clinics and some of the members of our Black Lung Association chapters went to Washington, DC to talk with our members of Congress about black lung issues. We were assured that the funding for the clinics program would be level at least until Congress passes a new budget. We weren't asking for any more funding, only to keep what we had.

We also talked about mine safety and health. Black
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lung is a totally preventable disease. We want Congress to force coal operators to do what it takes to make sure no more miners get the disease. There are some new regulations pending that would cut the dust levels in half. This we believe would prevent miners from getting black lung disease-especially if it is enforced. So we asked our congressional representatives to apply whatever pressure that they could to get the regulations approved.

And, of course, we let our representatives know how we feel about the Patriot bankruptcy and discussed with each of them the impact that would have on communities in West Virginia. Although they will have no direct influence on the bankruptcy proceeding, they have introduced legislation to bring the Patriot workers under the Coal Act. This would ensure that they continue to have health care benefits. Both Senator Rockefeller and Senator Manchin have introduced the bill in the Senate. Congressman Rahall with Congressman George Miller, who is from California, introduced it in the House. At this time, neither Congressman McKinley nor Congresswoman Capito have come out in support of the retirees who will be affected.

The Springing of Summer

by *Vickie Mullins*

Fall is the time of year when the trees are beautiful colors and the leaves begin to leave off the trees; we then know it's time for old Mr. Winter! The cold, dark, long days that become nights too soon because of the time difference. We can't wait until spring! The warm sunshine that brings longer days, and brighter evening's warmer nights. I take you back to the seasons because this is how our After School Program gets up in gear. When the program first starts, the building is surrounded by all kinds of kids from all over Fayette County. But soon as spring comes, they begin to play sports and other challenging activities that the regular schools offer. We offer some good things also. For example, we challenge their minds with creative ideas about learning, experiments, science projects, mathematics, and healthy foods!

We as instructors and mentors have the opportunity to be a part of these kids lives. The regular school has them starting off; then they come to us for a continuation of directions, instructions, and guidance. We need to always be a positive role model, teaching the curriculum that is provided to them. The class-room-trout project is a good project that will be remembered in their minds. As we move forward with this project, we need to teach them that once the fish are ready, they will be released into the bigger fountain of water. The kids had a part in raising them just like parents are raising them to become adults. As we move forward into this journey; we will always put the kids first and make sure they have a bright future in the After School Program at SALS!



Senator Laird address crowd at the Historic Oak Hill School where citizens attended the public hearing of the Select Committee on Child Poverty. Seated are Senators Miller and Unger, Senators Stollings & Cockman are not in picture.

Citizens Make Voices Heard on Child Poverty

By C.V. Moore, The Register-Herald, March 19, 2013

At Historic Oak Hill School — Standing room only greeted 150 community members who came out last Wednesday evening to share stories with law makers about what child poverty looks like in Fayette County, and how it might be relieved.

The new 11-member Senate Select Committee on Children and Poverty met in Oak Hill to hear about the issue directly from those who see and experience it every day.

“We do a lot of talking in Charleston, and I’ll tell you we’re here primarily tonight to listen to you speak,” said Sen. William Laird (D-Fayette) to kick off the meeting.

And speak they did — from stories of hungry children gorging on snacks at after-school programs to funding requests for poverty relief programs to specific proposals to begin new initiatives.

They came at the issue from many perspectives, but all who spoke agreed that there’s a big problem in their community.

Drema Davis says extreme poverty leads many children to Appalachian Regional Hospital, where she works in the adolescent psych ward.

Harry Fuller, a pastor, wants to build an after-school center where children can eat, exercise, and elevate their education.

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Scott Miller, the executive director of Just for Kids, wants assistance in making connections with the business community to help fund child advocacy centers.

Jessica Zukowsky — a Mount Hope native, Vista worker, and mother of two — urges an expansion of Medicaid and assistance to families who want to break the cycle of poverty.

Jacob Ivey, student body president at Oak Hill High School, wants more incentives for higher education and an increase in the value of Promise scholarships.

Ray Wibel, who trains low-income seniors for the work force, says many need employment to support grandchildren whose parents aren’t able to pay the bills.

And Ron George, a minister, says the government isn’t the total solution to child poverty, but they could sure help by improving the state’s business climate.

These were just a few of 20 who came forward to speak directly to their legislators.

Their many approaches to the issue highlight something about its fundamental nature — that it’s the result of a web of pressures and dynamics that no single 12-point plan can fix.

The complexity of its causes matches the expansiveness of its results.

“Research has shown that a child’s development between 0 and 8 is critical to their cognitive ability. By looking at children, we can reduce incarceration, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and all these factors that we’re paying for later,” senate majority leader Sen. Ron Unger (D-Berkeley) tells The Register Herald.

Unger, who chairs the select committee, says he’s not just looking for a change in legislation or funding struc-

tures — he wants to change the culture around child poverty.

He says listening to stories like the ones told on Wednesday will help the committee members become more compassionate legislators who remember children with every piece of legislation they undertake.

Select committees in the West Virginia legislature are typically created to address specific issues and report any findings and recommendations to the full legislative body.

Formation of the select committee on Children and Poverty was announced by Unger on Jan. 20. At the time he said the committee would take a “holistic approach” to the issue.

The committee held its first meeting on Feb. 20 and since then has heard from organization heads who work with children or on issues that intersect with them, like education and economic reform.

Many on Wednesday spoke about the positive impact that the Southern Appalachian Labor School (SALS), which hosted the event, has had in their lives.

Suade Thomas is a high school dropout and father who earned a GED at the school and currently works there. He urged the committee to create more opportunities like SALS.

“Programs like what we do will give people a better chance to have jobs. Paid training opens up a lot of opportunities for many people,” he said.

Over half of West Virginia kids were eligible for free or reduced price school meals in 2009, according to Kids



Count data. A quarter lived in poverty. And the abuse and neglect rate was double the national average.

The “Our Children, Our Future” campaign, sponsored by the West Virginia Healthy Kids and Families Coalition, has created a ten-issue platform to end child poverty, available at <http://www.wvhealthykids.org/>.

The select committee plans to hold a similar public meeting in Beckley on March 20 at the Commission on Aging. After the legislative session, committee members will travel all over the state holding meetings, Unger said.

The committee’s agendas can be monitored at <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/committees/senate/main.cfm> or at Unger’s legislative website, <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Senate1/majorityleader.cfm>.

A video of Wednesday’s meeting will be available on the website.

“I truly believe that (...) where there is no vision, the people perish,” Sen. Ron Miller (D-Greenbrier) told Wednesday’s crowd. “What we have here is a committee that’s looking for a vision for this state and the people that make the difference here in West Virginia.”



Editor’s Note: See the YouTube link below to watch the Hearing on the Senate’s page...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_3dV2al9tI&list=UUQD0QVR-fTnYemQa_1FtwNg&index=10

Coalfield Enviro Health Project

by Andrew Munn

Many Fayette County residents are coming together to learn about and discuss the impacts of surface mining on our communities in the Coalfield Environmental Health Project.

Here are a couple ways you can be a part of this important project:

Volunteer for the Beards Fork/Page/Kincaid Community Health Survey: Residents of Beards Fork have noticed that people in their community seem to get cancer at a higher rate than one would normally expect. Following the second community forum, where we discussed the health effects of surface mining with Dr. Michael Hendryx of WVU, we launched a community health survey to get hard numbers and get a better understanding of health problems in our area and their possible causes. We will need volunteers to implement the survey. If you are interested, call Andrew Munn at 304-924-1506.

Community Forum: Mountain Community Economics
Join us to talk about efforts to diversify the coalfield economy. As the coal industry continues to contract in West Virginia, it is up to West Virginians to chart their economic course forward. Join us for this important discussion on August 19, at 6 PM - call for location.

Environmental Protection Training

If you or your property have been effected by or could be effected by surface mining, this training is for you. There are existing laws to protect the environment and your community from these impacts, but they aren't always easy to get enforced. Come to this training and learn straight forward, effective ways to submit complaints regarding violations to state and federal agencies and get results. September 9, 6 PM at the SALS Community Center in Beards Fork

Surface Mining and Water Quality with Dr. Ben Stout

Join us to hear from a leading water quality expert, Dr. Ben Stout. His field work has assisted communities dealing with well water contamination and documented the impact of surface mining on stream quality. Loop Creek, and Fayette County's waterways are a precious resource to which we are inextricably linked. We will hear his presentation and discuss efforts to keep Fayette County's water clean. October 7, 6 PM Fayetteville, WV. Call for location.

The first two community forums of the Coalfield Environmental Health Project have been well attended and made room for forward looking discussion about the issues we face.

SALS Journal



Andrew Munn addresses citizens at Coalfield Health meeting at Historic Oak Hill School Cafeteria

At the first forum, we heard a presentation on the expansion of Frasure Creek's surface mines and an overview of the active and proposed permits that make up the site. It sparked an in depth conversation of the permits, mining techniques being used, and how the regulatory process oversees them.

These questions were addressed more in depth at the 1st training of the coalfield environmental health project, where Rob Goodwin of Coal River Mountain Watch and Dennis Stottlemeyer of the WV DEP's Office of Environmental Advocate led a training for residents of Beards Fork and Page on spotting water contamination from mine sites and reporting violations. There was interest among attendees in getting Beards Fork listed as a trout stream, which would give it greater protections from mine impacts.

Dr. Michael Hendryx of WVU joined us at the second community forum to give a presentation on public health and surface mining. His presentation covered a range of health problems all of which are at higher occurrences in areas where large scale surface mining takes place. These include heart disease, respiratory ailments, kidney disease, birth defects, and higher mortality rates.

Regulatory agencies have a metric to quantify the economic value of a human life, and using this figure, the cost to the region in deaths greatly exceeds the economic benefits of mining. Though the health affects are across the board, there has not yet been a pin pointed cause. That is, what is it about surface mining that creates these health problems? Higher toxic particulate concentration in air and water are both possibilities.

Following Dr. Hendryx' presentation, Charlene Newkirk spoke about the seemingly high rates of cancer in Beards Fork, and expressed interest in a community

health survey to give residents an accurate picture of health and possible environmental influences on health. The survey will be done in this summer.

Over 60 people, including local business owners, county commissioners, the DEP office of Environmental Advocate, and most importantly many Fayette County residents have joined the discussion. We hope to see you at our upcoming events.

For more information about the project or to get involved, contact Andrew Munn at 304-924-1506 or Kathryn South at 304-779-2280.

The Ordeal

by Debra Spurlock

A few months back I was busy at work rushing to get all my assignments completed so I could go home and cook before going to our monthly board meeting. After finally getting out of the office and getting home, I made a quick meal. Since we were carpooling I drove to the community center and parked my car. Due to shortage on van drivers we combined our trip with one of the after school runs.

The van driver, a fellow staff member, six kids and I started off on our trip. We made a stop in a neighboring town to pick up a VISTA volunteer. After she had boarded the van, we headed to drop off the kids at their individual stops. As we were riding along I noticed a HUGE deer on the left hand side of the road attempting to cross in front of us. I was in the passenger side, front seat.

The driver was momentarily distracted at the time by one of the back seat passengers. Then I saw the deer and I screamed "DEER!", but it was too late. We had hit the deer. It happened so fast. After the initial impact the air bags had deployed, sticking to my face causing a burning sensation. The dust from the air bags had filled the van in a matter of time.

Shortly after that, I had a horrible pain in my right ankle. I couldn't find anything that had hit my ankle, but I did know something was terribly wrong. I immediately knew it was broken.

The kids were screaming and wanting to get out of the van. Someone had called 911. My leg and foot were shaking uncontrollably, I felt sick to my stomach. I was then told an ambulance was on the way. I called my husband and son, who were there in minutes to comfort me.

My daughter and her fiancé were stopped in the traffic and came running, because they knew I was going to be in that very van. It seemed like time was going by

slowly before the ambulance showed up. When they finally arrived, they cut my sock off and put my foot in a bed pillow and taped it together. They got permission to give me pain medicine, which didn't help. Some of my fellow co-workers showed up at the accident site.

Upon my arrival at the emergency room, I noticed family members, friends, and fellow co-workers waiting to hear about my condition. After many tests, I was told what I already knew, I had a broken ankle. I was put in a splint, given an IV dosage of pain medicine and sent home with crutches and a follow up with an orthopedic surgeon.

The visit with the surgeon was scheduled two days later. I showed up expecting to get a cast, instead I got the news that I needed surgery.

One week and one day after the accident, I had surgery. The doctor placed two screws in my ankle to assist the healing process. I was sent home again with crutches and no weight bearing instructions.

I had no idea how intense it could be to only use one leg. Even the simplest of tasks, became a major job. I couldn't go to the bathroom by myself. I couldn't shower without assistance. I had to be dressed by my daughter. I would put things off until absolutely necessary, because it was so exhausting and painful. I could do nothing around the house, leaving my family to do everything.

I returned to the doctor four weeks after surgery. He then removed the stitches and told me no weight bearing for at least two more weeks. I was put in a walking boot, which was cruel, a walking boot, but couldn't walk. I continued to sit and watch life go by.

After my six weeks from surgery were up, I returned to the doctor. I could finally begin the weight bearing process. I also had to take physical therapy for six weeks, three times per week. I began walking using my crutches and my walking boot. Slowly, I did away with the crutches and then finally the walking boot.

I am walking now, but still with a limp. The screws that were installed have yet caused another problem. I don't have enough skin or flesh to cover the heads of the screws. The doctor said he might have to take them back out. Oh no! Not another surgery.

I guess when I return to the doctor, I will see what he suggests. In the meantime, I have been working from home and helping out all I can. I will probably return to work soon. I would like to thank everyone who assisted and helped me in any way. From the ambulance crew, my fellow co-workers, to my family and friends. Thank you for all the help, cards, flowers, calls, food, presents, etc. I love you all and appreciate everything you all have done for me in my time of need.

How Did We Get To June Already?

by Dorothy Rudy

As I was writing for the winter newsletter, I said I expected my VISTA time to be up in February. I had a surprise. It was extended, and unlike many AmeriCorps, VISTA, and other government-sponsored volunteer organizations around the country, Step-by-Step West Virginia is funded by an annual grant so my sponsor will not be impacted this year by the funding problems and budget cuts around our country, such as those affecting so many other organizations and agencies such as SALS.

Now, what has happened in these past 6 months? See my articles below:

Trout in the Classroom Grant

With the help of the AfterSchool Students, we have set up our aquarium in the dining room for the **Trout in the Classroom** project. This is the 2nd year that we have been awarded this grant. The aquarium really is pretty, however because of the mechanical problems experienced last year, causing all the trout to die, SALS has no eggs or fingerling trout in our aquarium this spring with which to help stock the neighboring creeks. It was decided by **Trout Unlimited**, who supplies the trout eggs and supports this program, that the aquarium needed to run without the fish until everyone is satisfied that mechanical problems have been resolved and can't impact the life cycle of the precious brown trout. We will receive our trout eggs this fall, in October.

However, just because we didn't have the trout to stock Loup Creek doesn't mean that SALS YouthBuild and AfterSchool programs are not involved with the project. On Monday, April 29, our youth cleaned a lot of debris out of the creek near the school. They worked for about 1 ½ hours to clean the creek at the worst spot. This debris was left from the damage caused by the Derecho last June 29. Although the debris provides great nesting and breeding spots for the fish and other stream critters, in some places it was so heavy that with heavy rains Beards Fork could be flooded.

Trout Unlimited as part of **Save our Streams**, (also known as **SOS**), assisted by our volunteers, both adults and youth, tested the waters of Loup Creek, from the tributaries at Ingram Branch, where Frazier Creek Mining began mountaintop removal mining several years ago. Charlene "Red" Newkirk from the SALS After School program was among the adult participants testing the stream. Those tests continued downstream to Mulberry. Not only were the waters tested to ensure the quality would sustain the trout, it was also tested to see what contaminants were seeping into the creek from the nearby mountaintop

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Aquarium in the Beards Fork Cafeteria in testing mode. Trout stock will arrive this fall.

removal operation. We also wanted to see what critters (flora and fauna) grew in the creek because the trout and other fish require them to sustain life. We will continue to monitor and test the waters of these creeks on June 29, August 17, and October 19. The results of this testing will be reported in our next issue. If you would like to join in this interesting study, please call SALS at (304) 779-2772.

Kids and Family Day at the Legislature

On February 26, five of us from SALS joined 400 others from around the state for **Kids and Family Day at the Legislature**. Displays were set up in lower Rotunda. Charlene Newkirk's display related to our **AfterSchool Program**, now in its 2nd decade of operation. Our **Energy Express** program is in its 14th year in Beards Fork, and Vickie Mullins presented it. Both Linda Dillard and Kim Barrett assisted with these displays. The third display was Dorothy Rudy's whose principal focus this year was **Disaster Preparedness** as a result of the storm last June 29 which knocked out power and water, and therefore the ability to preserve or prepare meals to most of the area for nearly two weeks. Since it is highly unlikely that last summer's Derecho will be the last disaster the area faces, it is absolutely necessary that everyone is prepared for all emergencies, no matter the season. Many legislators and other visitors came to speak with us about the programs that SALS sponsors. The day was quite successful and four (4) bills were passed regarding child poverty as a result of this and other meetings throughout the state.

Local Emergency Shelters

SALS, in both Beards Fork and the Historic Oak Hill School locations, are completing preparations to be recognized by FEMA as Emergency Shelters. Although Beards Fork has had emergency propane generators for

Juneteenth, a History

several years, supplying hot water and the ability to cook and keep foods cold or frozen, it has not been officially recognized as an emergency shelter by FEMA and the Fayette County Office of Emergency Management. The dorm is totally handicap accessible, as required. However the school itself needs some minor repair and renovations, to make it accessible. During the Derecho and the two weeks which followed, the Community Center in Beards Fork served as an emergency site, enabling the residents to cook and bathe. Although the power was out at the Page-Kincaid PSD, this community center was the focus of the delivery of water and ice.

The SALS Historic Oak Hill's lower floor, on the other hand, is totally handicap accessible. With a large commercial kitchen, it has the capacity to really feed a crowd in an emergency. It is in need of a huge emergency generator to supply power. SALS leadership team is in the process of researching sources and funding for this project, enabling it to be officially named by FEMA and the Fayette County Office of Emergency Management as a Disaster Emergency Shelter as well.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Activities

SALS community center in Beards Fork hosted a program for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. A luncheon was provided to about 40 guests. The speaker of the hour, Mr. Joseph Bundy, was sponsored by the WV Humanities Council. He portrayed Martin Robison Delany, an African-American and a West Virginian, who was one of the most important black abolitionists during the Civil War period. Mr. Delany, a physician, was one of the first three blacks admitted to Harvard Medical School, an author, and the highest ranking black commissioned officer in the Civil War. In just a few minutes, the audience was engrossed in the story of Dr. Delany, the education, and all the spectacular events in his life, which for a black man in this era, should have been impossible. Dr. Delany's connection to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? He inspired Dr. King to begin the Freedom March and his famous "I Have A Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial 100 years later.

Also participating in the program were The Brown Singers from Montgomery. The Brown Singers include: Paulette Brown, Fay Payne, Anita Terrell, and Bonita Johnson, who sang and played the keyboard with rousing music of the era.

Juneteenth Solidarity, continued from page one

In addition, the event commemorates West Virginia Day which, this year is the 150th Birthday of our state and Juneteenth marking the day that last slaves learned of Abraham Lincoln's Proclamation of Emancipation.

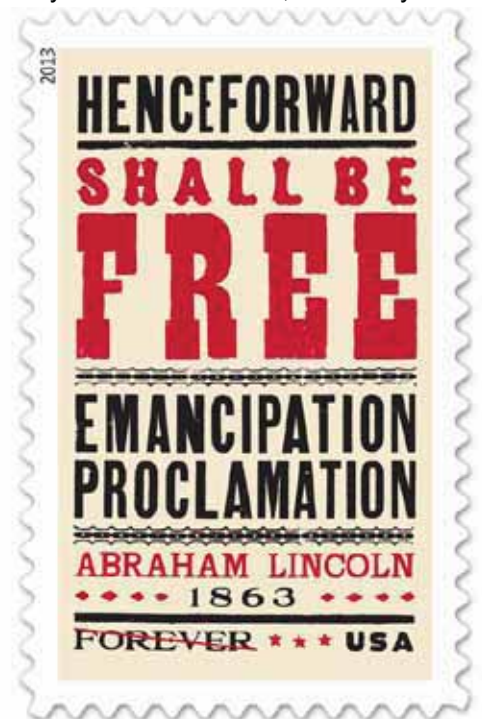
This is the 37th year of service by SALS to West Virginians and local communities.

Juneteenth is the oldest celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the US. June 19th 1865, Union soldiers arrived at Galveston, Texas with news the war had ended and the slaves had been freed. This was two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation! The proclamation had little effect in Texas because of the lack of Union military presence. Several stories attempt to explain the delay of this news. One report was that the messenger sent to deliver the proclamation was murdered. Another is 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 one last cotton harvest before going to Texas to enforce the Proclamation.

The celebration of June 19th was called "Juneteenth" and grew more popular with the slave's descendants. The celebration was a time for banding together, to honor ancestors, and for prayer and thanksgiving. Juneteenth is now highly revered in Texas with many descendants 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 observance. Early on there was little interest outside the African American community. 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 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 thus a national day of pride in our diversity has emerged.



Director's Report, continued from page three

Authority, which includes Fayette and Raleigh counties. As we seek to expand the pool of eligible families for our affordable housing initiatives, this is great news that could permit some families to move out of a permanent rental situation to home ownership. According to the plan, up to 25 families can participate for a voucher renewal term of up to 15 years.

Thanks are due to Tony Bazzie, who directs Raleigh County Housing, and those joining SALS in this effort, namely Fayette County Commissioner/President Matt Wender, CAEZ Director Connie Lupardus, and Mt. Hope Mayor Michael Martin. Also assisting were William Dotson from the Huntington Housing Authority and John Martys from the Fairmont Housing Authority...and their staff members, along with Jonathan Zimmerman of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials. The deal was sealed when SALS and the CAEZ pledged to handle all counseling, eligibility, and support services to implement the program.

We are pleased to announce a HAC/Home Depot thrust that will address housing needs of veterans..... which will involve some counseling as well as possible collaboration with the VA.

We are pleased that Dr. Jim Oxendale has agreed to coordinate the first giant SALS book sale, which will occur at our annual Solidarity Festival on June 15th. Barb Painter will assist with this. Books, of course, are needed and people who have books to donate should call 304.465.4246. Education is a key part of the SALS mission and we hope this effort will continue as a regular event. All proceeds will support the programs of SALS.

We are pleased that two of the three new affordable homes completed in Oak Hill made the grade as "Energy Star 3" compliant. This certification pertains to building materials, design, HVAC, plumbing, and much more and occupants will experience significant cost savings. SALS has become a leader in green building thanks to support from the U.S. Department of Energy, YouthBuild USA, HUD, and the Housing Assistance Council.

The SALS Community Center in Beards Fork has had a highly successful after-school program this year and Energy Express will continue on-site this summer. The new relationship with the Mountaineer Food Bank has increased help to many families both there and at our Oak Hill site. Hundreds of Boy Scouts will be working at the facility this summer doing upkeep and maintenance.

The Historic Oak Hill School continues to evolve as a hub for learning, conferences, and cultural events, including the graduation ceremony for the LPN class as well as the combined ceremony for all programs at the Fayette SALS Journal



Charlene "Red" Newkirk (on right) with Senator Rockefeller's aide at Red's afterschool display during Children's Day at state capitol

Institute of Technology for Fayette County Schools. The opening of the Historic School Café has attracted lunch, dinner, and reception gatherings and both the gym and auditorium have been well used. Office areas, such as Experience Works, function within the building.

We regret to announce that Ron Yellets, a long-time supervisor, has retired. Ron has been a key component of our youth program but has experienced recent health issues. The SALS Family expresses our sincere thanks and appreciation to Ron and we believe many of you may wish to join in on this message. Send your message to SALS, P. O. Box 127, Kincaid, WV 25119 and we will pass it on.

Everyday is a day with a new development and a different challenge. Many of you support us as a Force For Good and we appreciate your trust. We need you more than ever to support us and we thank you in advance. Be well, do great things, and stay in touch!



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; 442-3328 or fax 442-3285

Kincaid Office: 304-250-7627

Debbie Spurlock, Housing Counseling:
304-442-3328 or 250-7627

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

John David, Director - 304-442-3156 or 465-9732

Joyce Brown, Program Support/Counselor
304-442-3328 or 250-7627

Ruth Lanham, Admin. Assistant - 304-442-3156 or 250-7627

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Marcus Wilkes	Vice Chair
Rick Wadsworth	Secretary /Treasurer
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Ralph Shockey
Linda Dillard
Jimmy Adkins
Terry Black
Ron Yellets

Youth Build Trainer
Custodian
YouthBuild Trainer
YouthBuild Trainer
YouthBuild Trainer

AmeriCorps/VISTA

Barbara Painter	AmeriCorps/VISTA
Dorothy Rudy	AmeriCorps/VISTA
Erica Horton	AmeriCorps/VISTA
Lisa Manley	AmeriCorps/VISTA
Jeremy Bess	AmeriCorps/VISTA
John Pinson	AmeriCorps
Kenneth Elmore	AmeriCorps
Swayde Thomas	AmeriCorps

'Accent Education' After School Program

Charlene Newkirk	Site Coordinator
Tony Canada	Project Director
Latoya Ray	Teacher
Wilda Salter	Foster Grandparent
Michaelleen Dorsey	Foster Grandparent

Energy Express

John Peal, Site Supervisor

Housing Intern

Dylan Jones

Environmental Justice

Andrew Munn

Environmental Health Clinic Project

Dr. Dan Doyle, M.D.

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

LeeAnn Gore & Mary Lynn Flint

WVU Extension Service

Lauren Weatherford, Andrea Meader

Casandra Bandy

Bookkeeping Team

Valarie Cowley, Ruth Lanham

Tom Bass, Artie Mullins, Debbie Spurlock



Yes, in these difficult times I understand the importance of an organization like the Southern Appalachian Labor School. Enclosed is my contribution to keep your essential work on track and moving forward.

Contributions to SALS are Tax deductible: Mail to SALS, POB 127, Kincaid, WV 25119

Enclosed is: ___\$50 ___\$100 ___\$500 Other \$_____

Or print a donation form at www.sals.info

Please send me a thank you gift.. ___\$50 + Donors will receive a SALS License Plate, or similar item

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SALS engages in solicitation for the purpose of acquiring funds to support the Southern Appalachian Labor School. WV residents may obtain a summary of our registration and financial documents from the Sec. of State, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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