

# SALS JOURNAL

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Southern Appalachian Labor School*



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## Poor People's Campaign is Reborn

*by Marcus Wilkes, SALS Board Chair*

Fifty years after the birth of the first Poor People's Campaign espoused by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., more than fifty thousand activists, community organizers, faith-based leaders, and concerned citizens marched the streets of Washington, D.C. demanding a moral revitalization of the national government. Leaders are demanding an end to Systemic Racism, Poverty and Inequality, Ecological Devastation, a War Economy and Militarism, and a National Morality.

On June 23, 2018, the Poor People's Campaign brought together 120 organizations that supported the nationwide call for action. In Washington, D.C. individuals proudly displayed their convictions with colorful banners, tee shirts, and moral support. For nearly five hours, songs and speeches motivated the crowd for the ensuing march to the national capitol. Music from freedom and justice choirs, faith-based leaders from the National Cathedral, Rev. William Barber, Native American communities, fraternal organizations, and generational activists, joined victimized individuals to expound upon the history of the movement and the effect of current national policies on poor people.

Re-occurring themes promoted at the March were espoused by Rev. Barber who called for a revolution to claim the Capitol by voting out antagonists or shutting down the government if representatives would not support economic and social justice policies that guaranteed rights and benefits for poor people, people of color, LBGQT, immigrants and other marginalized people.

Although there is broad support for the Poor People's Campaign from formal leaders in many high profile organizations, how can their desired goals be

SALS Journal



*Activists at the Poor Peoples March in Washington, DC*

accomplished in today's political environment, where the poor are divided among political lines, religious convictions, and ambivalence? My contention rests with increased communication within and among the branches of the Campaign, and better communication and education with the general public.

Prior to the March several people informed me that they would have appreciated more information and advanced notice in order to participate. Also I experienced confusion over when and where local meetings were being held. My previous experience with the Poor People's Campaign dates back to the 1980s, when Martin Luther King III came to Appalachia on a fact-finding mission and people came to an event at the SALS Beard's Fork Community Center to tell their story. Afterwards there was no apparent outcome from this event. My hope is that this 21<sup>st</sup> Century campaign will not become just another flash in the pan.

One important aspect of the March is to observe whether actions promoting the revitalization of morality in national policies are trending upward or

*continued on page ten*

# To Whom it May:

*Respectfully, by Thomas L. Bass, SALS Board*

I am being informed that the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) pension plan is in danger of becoming insolvent and a Joint Select Committee on the Solvency of Multi-Employer Pension Plans has been established by Congress. I want to take this opportunity as a disabled retired West Virginia coal miner, to thank those honorable legislators who have the humanity to understand/recognize we are not the top 1% in wealth and are in need of the humble compensation we receive from our UMWA pensions. I believe there are members in Congress who view those of us who have dedicated our lives to enter the bowels of the earth (in conditions that white collar criminals would never venture into) as less than human. Maybe it would benefit those animals to experience the conditions and hostile environments we toiled in.

What are/were these conditions? I personally have been in areas where my shoulders were too wide to turn over (yes we crawled on our stomachs). We were in conditions where the weight of the mountain was imbedding the equipment into the rock strata, methane gas was hemorrhaging from the coal formation and surrounding strata above and below the coal seam, and water was flowing from these formations into our work areas. We the miners toiled in these adverse conditions for the betterment of our nation as well as to support our families and communities.

We provided the resource that one could say built this country. In the making of this great nation with the sweat of our brow, the strength of our bodies, and the stamina of our minds. Lest we forget where we came from, the coal we produced was and is used to fuel the industries that commenced the industrial age for the production of steel, power, chemicals, fuel, etc. Throughout these periods the miners, the actual worker have/has been assaulted, and murdered. Even the Army Air Corps bombed them when they rebelled against their transgressors.

We are now faced with the final assault on us miners, to take the funds that support us and our widows in the finality of our life. I fail to comprehend the mentality of any civilized human being that would not want to correct this travesty. It appears now that our bodies are broken/crippled from our toils in the bowels of the earth and our funds to support our life's end are being taken away. We fail to understand this

aversion against us and why Congress would fight against us without cause. I could only conclude it is for the pure perversion of personal gratification.

To survive in this society we deserve to have a home, heat and cool said home, acquire substance to nourish our broken bodies, and acquire the needed medications most require to stay alive. There is no question that we need our pensions. Of course there are some we recognize who would prefer our demise and discard us as trash.

*For those I offer this from Psalms:*

2 For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.

3 They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and **fought against me without a cause.**

4 For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.

5 **And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.**

6 Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand.

7 When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin.

8 **Let his days be few; and let another take his office.**

9 Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.

10 Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.

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# Director's Report

*John David, SALS Executive Director*

I regret to report discouraging news. The fact is that SALS has been hit hard by many grant rejections. While on one hand, the staff has marvelous reports to share with you and we are all doing fabulous work. On the other hand, organizational sustainability is being challenged at a time when need has escalated. In fact, Fayette County – one of our primary service counties – is being reclassified on October 1, 2018 by the Appalachian Regional Commission as “distressed” instead of currently “at-risk”.

Another issue is successorship of my position. In the fall, we plan to bring aboard an under-study in order to insure the future of SALS. Implementation of any transition will be more costly than now, since I work as a volunteer.

We were delighted that Joe Mario again took the time to coordinate our annual college visitation and rafting expedition. Over 25 people joined Joe on the New River and all of our young adults heard his presentation – and the presentation by officials from BridgeValley Community and Technical College – about college.

BridgeValley CTC has now agreed to accept nine hours credit toward an Associate Degree in Construction Management or Technical Studies from SALS YouthBuild Graduates. Coupled with AmeriCorps Educational Awards, our young adults should be able to complete the degree at no cost.

Several new developments pertain to the SALS Board. Joe Webb, who has a long youthful history with SALS, is our new Treasurer and Tom Painter has joined the Board. Welcome to both!

Joe Webb also was the successful raffle winner of a week at Beach Quarters, the SALS timeshare at Virginia Beach donated by Jim Hores. He reported a fantastic week. Currently, tickets are again on sale for \$20 each as we attempt to raise funds to pay the maintenance fee. Please see the notice on the address page.

A number of donated and low-priced houses have come our way in Beards Fork, Page, and Oak Hill. They will be restored as funds permit for low income families. We have others underway in Boomer, Gauley Bridge, Montgomery, and Beckley from before as well.

The influx of volunteers created an opportunity to reflect on how many people have come to SALS since we began this program decades ago. The



*John David (far left) with Kris Warner, new WV Director of USDA-RD, visiting SALS Housing recently accompanied by David Cain, USDA Housing Director and staff John Fullen, Shane Houck, Roger Waugh, and Alan Harris. They visited Rehabs in the area, including this home owned by the Vealey Family.*

unbelievable number of volunteers is 19,572. This year, we had the Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice, College of the Holy Cross, Christian Endeavor, Group Cares, and Global Volunteers.

## **SALS Serves Thousands of Summer Meals:**

SALS served a record number of 2764 meals to young people and children 18 and under this summer. This Feed and Read Program served both the Valley and Plateau areas of Fayette County. The program served 2506 lunches and 258 breakfasts. This was a cooperative undertaking involving the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation, WV Dept. of Education's Office of Child Nutrition, Mountaineer Food Bank, USDA, WV Summer Vista Program, numerous donors, and SALS.

## **Top States & Cities that Produce AmeriCorps Members**

*West Virginia, Washington, D.C., Minnesota, New Orleans, Boston, and Utah among top locations*

WASHINGTON, D.C. - As part of its annual recruitment effort, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the federal agency that administers the AmeriCorps program, today released

*continued on page ten*



## YouthBuild News

*by Kathryn South, YouthBuild coordinator*

SALS is looking for young people between the ages of 16 to 24 for the new YouthBuild training program. We currently have 50 slots available for these out of school youth to participate with their peers to complete educational goals of receiving the TASC Certificate and to go forward with other certificates to build an educational portfolio.

This winter/spring season found everyone here trying to make it through the cold weather and deal with very high heating bills. One of the important skills the youth learn is how to insulate homes to help keep out the cold air and keep warm air in. The YouthBuild members have learned lots of ways to weatherize homes through the Green Building Program. All of the homes our youth have worked on must meet Energy Star standards and the materials used are Energy Star certified.

The youth had a two-day training with Xavier Walker, an energy specialist to learn more about weatherization and energy saving tips. Other trainings included a CPR class which the youth received a card for participating.

Our youth always look forward to summer and the special whitewater rafting trip sponsored by Adventure on the Gorge and coordinated by Joe Mario from Red Hat computer systems. This is a yearly event that gives everyone a chance to have a fun day and enjoy the river. This year, over 25 people participated in the full day trip.

*Picture below: Joe Webb (now SALS' Treasurer) and Kathryn South at a "Save AmeriCorps" meeting and rally in Washington DC in 2004.*



SALS Journal

## Office Headquarters News

*by Ruth Lanham, Administrator*

Hello everybody! The SALS Office in Kincaid is very busy with lots of things going on. We are still hustling to do a lot of grant applications to fund our continuing projects. We are just trying to keep us all afloat. Every day is a peak time it seems. The reports for the funders have to be done at different times in order to keep the grants going.

We are searching for grants to fund housing for low income families. We have so many families living in houses that are not energy efficient, or up to date with electric. The need in this area is tremendous. These low income families can't afford to do these repairs. By the time they pay for their medicine, utilities, and food they have no money to get materials to work on their houses. They are so appreciative when we do get to help them.

The work is very challenging. Our phones ring non-stop all day long with people needing help and wanting the services we offer. We have a lot of folks who just drop in needing different things.

The need is there and we do what we can.

The food pantry has picked up several new families. We are still serving many families in the area. If you would like to donate any of your fresh vegetables from your garden, we would gladly accept the donations.

We are still in desperate need of some good vehicles. We have a need for work trucks and cars or SUV's. We have tax credits available if you are interested. I am driving a 1993 Jeep that has hundreds of thousand miles and my family calls it a tank. The vehicle fleet that we have at this time is getting very worn and old with extremely high mileage. We also could use a car hauler and some good working freezers.

Also, we have families in need of furnishings such as washers, dryers, refrigerators, and stoves. When theirs quit working they have no funds to purchase these items. We would like to help everybody but we are not able to do so. If you would like to donate in any way to help our communities, any and all things would be greatly appreciated. Used appliances would be great. If you would like to donate to SALS you can call our office at 304.250.7627 or drop it by our Kincaid office on WV 61 one mile south of the Kincaid Post Office. You can also donate via PayPal on-line at [www.sals.info](http://www.sals.info). God will bless you richly for your kindness.

# AmeriCorps and More

*by Barb Painter, AmeriCorps Coordinator*

Wow, where has spring gone? The snow and ice have given way to beautiful flowers. Grass and mowing has kept everyone busy!

I have been busy working with the youth, teaching the PACT curriculum, and working with the volunteers. One of the volunteers even had mock interviews with the youth; this is something that will stay with them forever. It is exciting to get to know our volunteers and their abilities.

At a food summit meeting we discussed more ways to get food to people, like how to get more food pantries, community gardens and even how to have more grocery stores in rural areas so that people can purchase the food they need. Some people think that is not a problem. But if there is nowhere to buy food in your area, it is called a food desert.

I attended the United Way informational meeting concerning the Summer Foods Program. One of our youth attended with me so that she could learn more about the programs that SALS offers. Deanna was really interested in what was being discussed, and it is nice to get to know more about our youth.

I went to the Summer Foods training in Charleston with Vickie Mullins. As usual, it was very informative. There are several changes from last year. It was nice to spend the day with Vickie; we work together but very seldom see each other. Thanks to Vickie's hubby for taking us down and my hubby for coming to get us!

Vickie and I spent two days training the Summer VISTAs about the summer foods program. We trained them on the forms, civil rights, meal patterns and to just be polite and feed these hungry children. Sometimes that is the only meal a child receives during the day. I remember one little fellow that I tried to get to talk to me all summer. On the last day, he came running up, grabbed me around the knees, and was crying. He told me, "I love you, now what am I going to eat? I will get hungry!" This was said in two-year old's voice and I will admit that I cried all the way back to the school. These children really touch your heart!

We still sponsor the Helen M. Powell Food pantry once a month at the SALS Historic Oak Hill School (HOHS), as well as at the SALS Community Center in Beards Fork. In Oak Hill, the pantry is usually held in the dining room, but due to the site being a voting place for two precincts, we held the May



*SALS Feed & Read Volunteer reads to children at Pine Knoll Apartments in Oak Hill, WV*

pantry in the basement in a small room! It was tight, but we did it! Hats off to all the youth that helped with this venture!!!! Also, thanks to the Mountaineer Food Bank for its partnership!

I enjoy working with the residents at the Heritage House in Beckley as their Information and Referral Specialist. Tenants need help finding everything-from medical clinics to a place to buy used iron skillets. These folks are a delight to work with and I have met some really nice people.

I also continue to serve on the LEPC (Long-term Emergency Planning Committee) as the secretary. Keep an eye out for our Preparedness Fair which is still in the planning stage.

## Construction From The Top

*by Vickie Smith, Construction Manager*

The last several months have been very time consuming. I spend most days getting forms for the files filled in by the homeowners, checking on progress of the jobs, setting up accounts and setting up jobs with supplies if needed. Seems that I am plagued with paperwork, which I will admit, I do not like.

I have made some new friends along the way. I enjoy visiting the homes and seeing the progress that the homeowners are making with the assistance of our supervisors and youth.

We have had a few setbacks at the SALS Historic Oak Hill School recently due to broken water lines on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and a break-in. We also had our

yearly influx of volunteers. They bring freshness to us as we change lives of many in one form or another.

A brief on my medical. I had surgery January 31<sup>st</sup>. Recovery time was longer than I would have liked but did indeed go better than expected. My three month check up with the oncologist was a huge surprise to say the least. I am now on six daily chemo pills for the next year if my body is able to deal with it. Not exactly what I expected but as with anything we deal with we must move forward.

## House Rehabilitation Reports

*by James Harvey, VISTA*

Hello everyone! This is James Harvey reporting on supervising YouthBuild at another rehab at the Glen Jean home of Frederick Grey. We are currently remodeling three bedrooms, including new floors, walls, ceilings, and insulation. The house has been completely rewired from outside and inside. It also has a new roof, soffit, and flashing. Fred Grey's house has come a long way and I am very proud of the crew that's working on it.

## YouthBuild Success

*by Austin Flint, VISTA*

Hello I am Austin. I completed SALS YouthBuild and just graduated from the Electrical Technology program at Fayette Institute of Technology in May of this year. I'm an AmeriCorps member with SALS and have become a site supervisor at the current time. I have received my Journeyman's electrical license. I also obtained my driver's license during this time. I'm planning to continue furthering my education.

## YouthBuild Success

*by Sam Slater, Summer VISTA*

Hi, I'm Sam. I was in YouthBuild and now I'm a summer VISTA. I also just graduated from the Electrical Technology Program at Fayette Institute of Technology this past May. I joined summer VISTA to further my education and to get more experience with the community. Afterwards, I'm planning on being an electrician. This summer I am planning on helping volunteers learn more about our community.

SALS Journal

## Review

*by Jessi Parker, VISTA*

Since the last time we checked in there has been lots happening. In December, the holiday dinner went well and I really enjoyed seeing everyone again this year. The green house made from plastic soda bottles has really taken off and we are starting to piece everything together now. Two of our YouthBuild members who graduated this May also passed with a 93 percent for journeyman electrician status! Yay, way to go Sam and Austin!

I have also been coordinating with volunteers on things around the Historic Oak Hill School this year showing them the ways of SALS, such as how to prepare for graduations in our auditorium. We also prepared for the Summer Foods Program where we feed low income children lunch and read books to them in various locations around the region. Finally, we also have summer VISTA's who help with the Summer Foods this year. This will be a new experience for them to get involved with kids in the community.

## Precious Moments

*by Kenna Bass, VISTA*

It is again a very busy time of the year. The Garden is already well on its way growing many goodies. We have two kinds of sweet corn, bush beans, pole beans, cabbage, tomatoes, brussel sprouts, and asparagus. We also have sweet and hot peppers, broccoli, cauliflower, pumpkins and more. There is something for everyone!

We are still taking care of our pot belly pigs George, Fifi, and Lulu. The chickens are happily producing eggs and we now have ducks again! Another full summer of Energy Express is underway until the end of summer which is already on the horizon.

## Seasons

*by Andrew Stewart, Summer VISTA*

Winter has come and gone, and summer it is once again! The plants we started have now begun to mature and thrive. Harvest will be here before we know it. I became part of the Summer VISTA program to feed and read to low income families during the summer. Vickie Mullins was our trainer. She fed our heads with a lot of knowledge to prepare us for the program. The community garden project is com-



ing along great too. Also, we are brainstorming to open another community garden in Kincaid. Serving the community better makes the heart warmer so it can last through the winter. Then we'll start all over again.

## Reflections

*by Nick Gates, Summer VISTA*

My name is Nicholas Gates and I have served my community through the Southern Appalachian Labor School (SALS) since 2012. Here it is now 2018 and I am proud of the work and progress that I have been involved in. There is a great pride taken just knowing that I can and have made a difference.

Since the beginning of the year, I have started my own project working on constructing a storage building for the community garden and for the animals. I help out with the after school program and love working with everyone around me.

I am now involved with the planning and programs of the Summer Foods Program. This because I am a Summer VISTA and I'll be part of the team going to feed anyone ages birth to eighteen years of age in the Montgomery/Smithers area. Needless to say, I am very excited to see what happens and the differences yet to be made.

## STEAMing at SALS

*by LaToya Ray, teacher*

Since December in our After School program, the older youth participated in four different focus area including tutoring, zuma, creative writing, and STEAM, (Science, Technology, English, Arts, and Math). In my science classes, they performed a lot of robotic activities, did science experiments, built a chicken house, and observed cells under the microscope. William and I took a couple of kids to the Fairmont N.A.S.A. Center. We also took a couple of kids to Charleston (Upper Kanawha Valley) to advocate for support to help continue our After School and Summer programs at SALS.

## Another New Beginning

*by Vickie Mullins, Community Center Coordinator*

Our After School Program has come and gone; now it's time for Summer Fun! Summer fun begins with School-age kids coming to the SALS Beards Fork Community Center

SALS Journal



*State Senator and Minister Rev. Steve Baldwin shares breakfast and reading with kids at our Energy Express program in SALS Beards Fork Community Center*

Fork Community Center for Energy the Express six-week program. They were sad when After School ended because they could no longer get tutoring help, play outside on our playgrounds, interact with their peers, hang out and help feed the animals along with Drew and Kenna in the garden, and enjoy the wonderful free meals they received before they were transported home on our vans.

We also have received a grant allowing us to host a RAZE Program here at Beards Fork; since these programs are usually only in Schools. This is a Tobacco Free Prevention Program for School-Age kids (Middle-High School) geared toward preventing tobacco use while they can still be reached.

The RAZE kids that came to both programs also attended several off-site events. One was Children's Day at the Legislature and the other was a community clean-up in Beards Fork. After School ended once public school closed, which left only a couple of weeks to start recruitment for our Summer Program. This program is so unique because it allows kids to continue their learning during the summer. The kids not only read tons of books; but they also write, draw, paint, play non-competitive games, and they get to express themselves with plays and drama. The program is funded by WVU Extension, AmeriCorps, and SALS. If you are interested in learning more about the program visit the web-site at [www.energyexpress.edu.gov](http://www.energyexpress.edu.gov). You are urged to continue to learn about this unique six-week summer reading/nutritional program because here at SALS we believe in promoting education for our youth since they are out Future!!!!

## Sowing to Harvest in SALS Garden!

by Billy Austin, VISTA

Beginning in spring, we prepared the garden area at the SALS Community Center in Beards Fork for this year's planting. While planning the garden I concentrated on finding funding for the project. With the federal cuts, money is getting harder to find. We attended the Try This Conference in June so that we could apply for a grant to incorporate solar energy into our gardening project. This may enable us to plant year-round.

In the meantime, we'll remain busy by organizing food day, coordinating help with the kids in the after-school program, making sure they get home in the evenings, attending meetings and conferences, and whatever else we're needed to do. Learning about resources is part of what is important. We never knew that NASA has a building in Fairmont, WV until we attended a robotics symposium there recently.

Helping with the food day distribution project has really made me aware of how many families look forward to the food boxes. Realizing that times are hard for many, we plan to make this year's harvest grander than last years. We are also seeking to get more people involved in the community garden and, hopefully, expand to the SALS property near the Kincaid post office. All told, we are planning for a great garden this year!



*Vickie Mullins, Latoya Ray, and Andrew Stewart proudly show produce from the SALS Garden used for meals at Energy Express.*

SALS Journal

## Happenings at SALS Regina Three Rivers Apartments

by Brenda Warrick, VISTA

When Spring was here and the air is nippy. Trees are blooming and we are putting flowers in the ground, especially perennials. The tenants are taking such pride in their surroundings. Seems like yesterday people referred to Regina as the "Ghetto and Gun Smoke" now it has a great name and folks are proud to say "We live at the NEW Regina Apartments!" This makes me so proud to see a once run down place turn into what it is today.

Summer is coming right along and the community garden is growing beautiful. The harvest will be used to feed the tenants. The children love the playground and we have now just leased the land directly across the road for more picnic tables and a barbecue pit. We are still growing and our name is getting better as we go along.

The experience here at Regina has given me an appreciation for folks that work together as a team. They started out with very little but the place now speaks for itself. Hopefully we can keep growing and making Regina a positive place for folks to live and raise children. As for me Regina is like a second home, always warm and comfortable.

## Renewal

by Brittini, Summer VISTA

Due to a car accident, I was unable to walk for six months. When I started walking again, John David graciously allowed me to volunteer at the administrative building so that I could get out of the house and build up my stamina. Since then, I have been working as an AmeriCorps VISTA summer associate with the Feed and Read program. I can't imagine a better way to take this second chance at life than to help provide educational resources and meals during the summer to children in struggling families. I eagerly look forward to the adventures yet to come.

## Constructing Change

by Terry Black, Site Supervisor

At the SALS Historic Oak Hill School we have been very busy. This ranges from the reports and



clean ups we do on our own school to going out and working at other sites with SALS Housing, including the Vealey site, Deepwater site, and the Regina Apartments.

We also host different graduations and events at the Historic Oak Hill School. For example, we have hosted the Fayette Institute of Technology and JROTC graduations for over three years. We just recently had two preschool graduations also. Sometimes people or organizations come in and rent the cafeteria or auditorium for events. When everything is over, we all pitch in to help clean up and get ready for the next event.

## **An Opportunity to Serve**

*by Marcus Wilkes, SALS Board Chair*

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act, a vision of former President John F. Kennedy, which established the VISTA program, a vehicle whereby men and women could work to eradicate vestiges of poverty within the United States. Soon dedicated men and women such as former Senator Jay Rockefeller, who served as a VISTA in Boone County, and other SALS supporters such as Rick Wadsworth and Jan Young picked up the torch to advocate on behalf of voiceless people in southern West Virginia who were caught in the snare of poverty.

Many of these VISTAs worked in health clinics, anti-poverty agencies, and legal advocacy firms to represent people with limited resources. Eventually, in the mid-70's current SALS Director, Dr. John David, a former Peace Corps volunteer who served in Ghana, Africa, came to a small southern West Virginia educational institution and received direction from the institution's leader to promote those values that protect the economic and social vitality of emerging working people. Dozens of people within the education community, unions, media, business, and policy-makers worked conceiving ideas on the utilization of the momentum to revitalize communities in southern West Virginia.

Today, SALS serves as a base for over a thousand volunteers from churches, colleges, and volunteer organizations coming to Fayette and adjoining counties each year to improve housing for low income individuals. These helpers, young and old, labor to repair roofs, build handicap accessible en-

trance points, repair flooring, and paint houses while enjoying the scenery that generally is different from their part of the country.

Surveys conducted at the end of each tour validates our belief that opportunities to serve for volunteers advances an appreciation for their own community, and instill values in understanding the daily struggles for those who are less fortunate. These volunteers express that they would like to come back to southern West Virginia to help make a difference. They add to the local economy with their purchases, participate in tourism activities, and make friends while here.

SALS continues to spend thousands of dollars to meet requirements from fire marshals and health departments to keep the volunteers safe. A fire sprinkler system is being placed in the Historic Oak Hill School facility to accommodate volunteers, and for special events such as graduations by local schools at a cost of over \$105,000. Individual donations and support from the UMWA and Communication Workers is moving this project forward in time to help us meet deadlines for our visitors from across this great country.

AmeriCorps and Vista volunteers are important in supporting SALS's mission. These dedicated individuals engage in helping our consumers meet needs, plan activities, and conduct programs that educate the general public. Our radio station is primarily run by these volunteers. Volunteers contribute to find resources to help repair houses. Summer programs are conducted for children at two sites with transportation provided. Our food pantry exists due to the extraordinary work of these volunteers.

Our Board of Directors serves in a voluntary capacity, and provides valuable input on the direction and communicating the impact of SALS programming. Meetings are held one a month and can be lengthy, but necessary. There are so many challenges, but our aim is to continue to grow in programming and resources. Even with new faces around the table, we are confident that the fervor of our commitment to the residents of West Virginia is making a difference. At some point these new members will become the leaders at SALS. We want to encourage the realization that the cause is great and the needs of our community requires dedication.

*Campaign, continued from page one*

downward. At the event, Rev. Barber made several announcements that similar events were being held in other parts of the country, even in other countries, and being broadcasted live over the web.

At the Capitol steps, media reports that David Goodman of the Andrew Goodman Foundation, as well as other faith-based leaders, was arrested for refusing to disperse at the Capitol after reading a list of demands including restoration of the Voting Rights Act. Unfortunately, there was very limited national media exposure, because, as one leader surmised, the Million Man March has set a new benchmark for news coverage.

So a question of note should be: who is guiding this campaign and what strategies exist? Who can affiliates lean on for concerted recruitment, action, and assessment of impact? Clearly, there is recruitment occurring behind the scenes as identified with the broad support on the website. Is this process being replicated on a state or regional level? I understand that there are local branches in about 40 states. Are there priorities on issues among the organizations and branches, or should such issues be decentralized among them? How are local branches included in the development process?

Time and efforts of countless individuals will answer these questions.

Note: Marcus Wilkes, our Board Chair represented SALS at this historic event.

***Cynthia Murray from Orlando Fla.  
sent the note below with her contribution!***

*I love the work you do.  
I love your passion.  
I love your Compassion.  
I love your humanity.  
I love how you empower people.  
I love your newsletter and  
the participatory approach.  
I love your sense of community.  
I love your tireless never give  
up efforts.  
I love Jim Hires' mugs and  
am happy to add to my  
collection.  
Thank you.  
C. J. Murray*

***A Big THANKS to Cynthia and ALL who support SALS!***

SALS Journal

*WV Top AmeriCorps State, continued from page three*

its annual rankings of the states and cities that generate the most AmeriCorps members.

West Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Minnesota take the top three spots in the states category. Baltimore, Minneapolis-St. Paul, and New Orleans claim the highest slots in the large-cities listing, with Provo, Utah, Lowell, Mass., and Providence, R.I. ranking highest among small cities.

"AmeriCorps is America at its best - people putting compassion into action," said Barbara Stewart, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency that administers the national service program. "Whether they come from big cities or small towns, all AmeriCorps members take the same pledge: to get things done for America. In thousands of communities across the country, organizations are looking for dedicated Americans to make the same commitment. With their service, we will continue to create a safer, stronger, more united nation."

Every year, 75,000 AmeriCorps members serve through 21,600 schools, nonprofits, and community and faith-based organizations across the country. These citizens have played a critical role in the recovery of communities affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. They also tutor and mentor young people, connect veterans to jobs, care for seniors, reduce crime and revive cities, fight the opioid epidemic, and meet other critical needs.

**Director's Notes:**

Thought you would like to finally see a "first" for West Virginia.....First in the nation in those joining AmeriCorps programs!!!! In a related story, the we will be welcomed an AmeriCorps NCCC Team to SALS for six weeks this summer. They assisted with SALS Housing by repairing and rehabilitating coal camp, flood damaged, or dilapidated homes for low income families. They worked with young adults in the SALS YouthBuild Academy program and for awhile with a group from Global Volunteers.

SALS began over 20 years ago soliciting volunteers to help with its housing, education, and development programs. Since then, over 19,000 volunteers have come through SALS to the Upper Kanawha Valley and Fayette County. The economic impact has been tremendous not only for local businesses, but also in improving living conditions, accenting educational services, and creating change from the ground up.

For further information, go to: [www.sals.info](http://www.sals.info) or Southern Appalachian Labor School on FaceBook

# Southern Appalachian Labor School - Who We Are

[www.SALS.info](http://www.SALS.info)

[www.ConstructingChangeAndBridgingGaps.com](http://www.ConstructingChangeAndBridgingGaps.com)

**SALS Community Center in Beards Fork**  
**SALS Historic Oak Hill School**  
**SALS Kincaid Central Office voice or fax:**

**304-779-2772/ph/fax or 779-2280**

**304-465-4246 phone/fax**

**304-250-7627 or 304-250-7627**

**John David, Director - 304-250-7627**

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

**Ruth Lanham, Admin. Assistant - 304-250-7627**

## AmeriCorps/VISTA

Austin Flint	VISTA
James Harvey	VISTA
William Austin	VISTA
Kenna Bass	VISTA
Brenda Warrick	VISTA
Jesse Parker	VISTA
Eric Keith	VISTA

## Board Officers

Marcus Wilkes	Chair
Joe Webb	Treasurer
John David*	Director jdavid@citynet.net
Barbara Painter	Secretary

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Vickie Smith*	Construction Manager vickiesmith1958@gmail.com
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Artie Mullins*	Community Center (reduced time) artiemullins@earthlink.net
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Barbara Painter	AmeriCorps/Green Coordinator bobbie761957@gmail.com
Sid Yoho	Heavy Construction
Linda Dillard	Custodian
Vickie Mullins	Community Center
Terry Black	YouthBuild Trainer

## 'Accent Education' After School Program

Latoya Ray Site Coordinator

## Energy Express

Tia Coleman Site Teacher

## WVU Extension Service

Lauren Weatherford, Andrea Meader  
Casandra Bandy

## WV Division of Juvenile Services

Youth Report Center/SALS Historic Oak Hill School  
Chuck Taylor, Director

## Bookkeeping Team

Valarie Cowley, Ruth Lanham  
Tom Bass, Artie Mullins

## Special Events

Joe Mario



**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: ☐ \$1,000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ Other\$\_\_\_\_\_**

**Please send me a thank you gift.. ☐ \$50 + Donors will receive a hand-crafted pottery mug.**

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**Give on the WEB at: [www.sals.info/donate](http://www.sals.info/donate)**

SALS engages in solicitation 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.



**Note: The following pages (13-19) are an extra addition to the Web version of this SALS News edition consisting of a (year 2000) Appalachian Regional Commission magazine article on the work of our organization.**

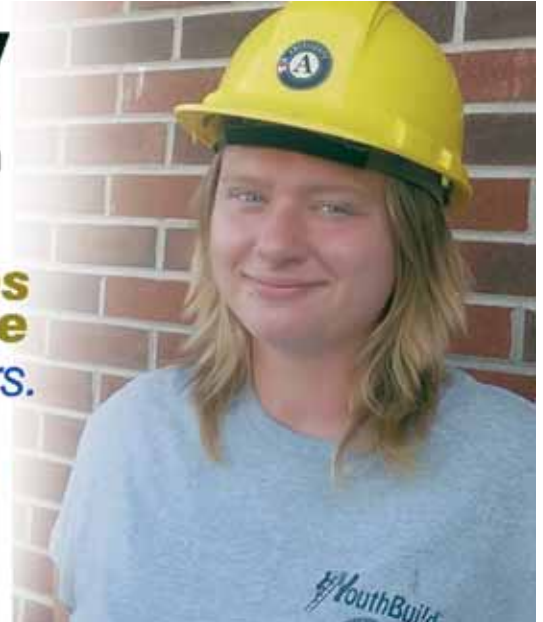
*We hope you enjoy this as much as we did!*



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**Dates of reservations: February 17th - 24th 2019**

Featuring a rooftop pool and restaurant overlooking the Atlantic Ocean; every room at this modern hotel on the Virginia Beach boardwalk offers a private balcony facing the beach.

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SALS Journal

Visit us on the web: [www.sals.info](http://www.sals.info)

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with the subject 'Add me to List'



# Appalachia

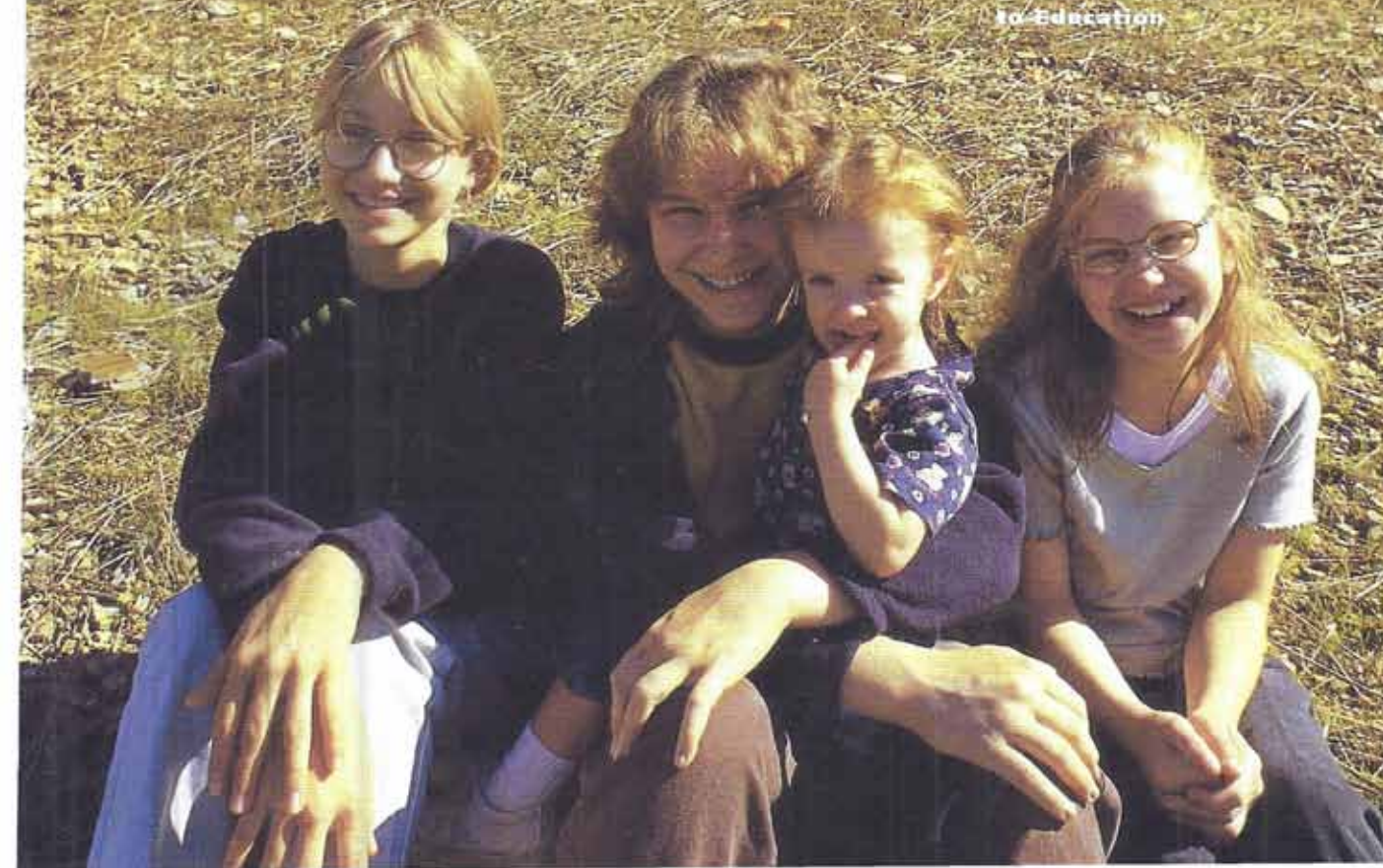
## Affordable Housing for Appalachia's Families

Building New Homes  
And New Futures

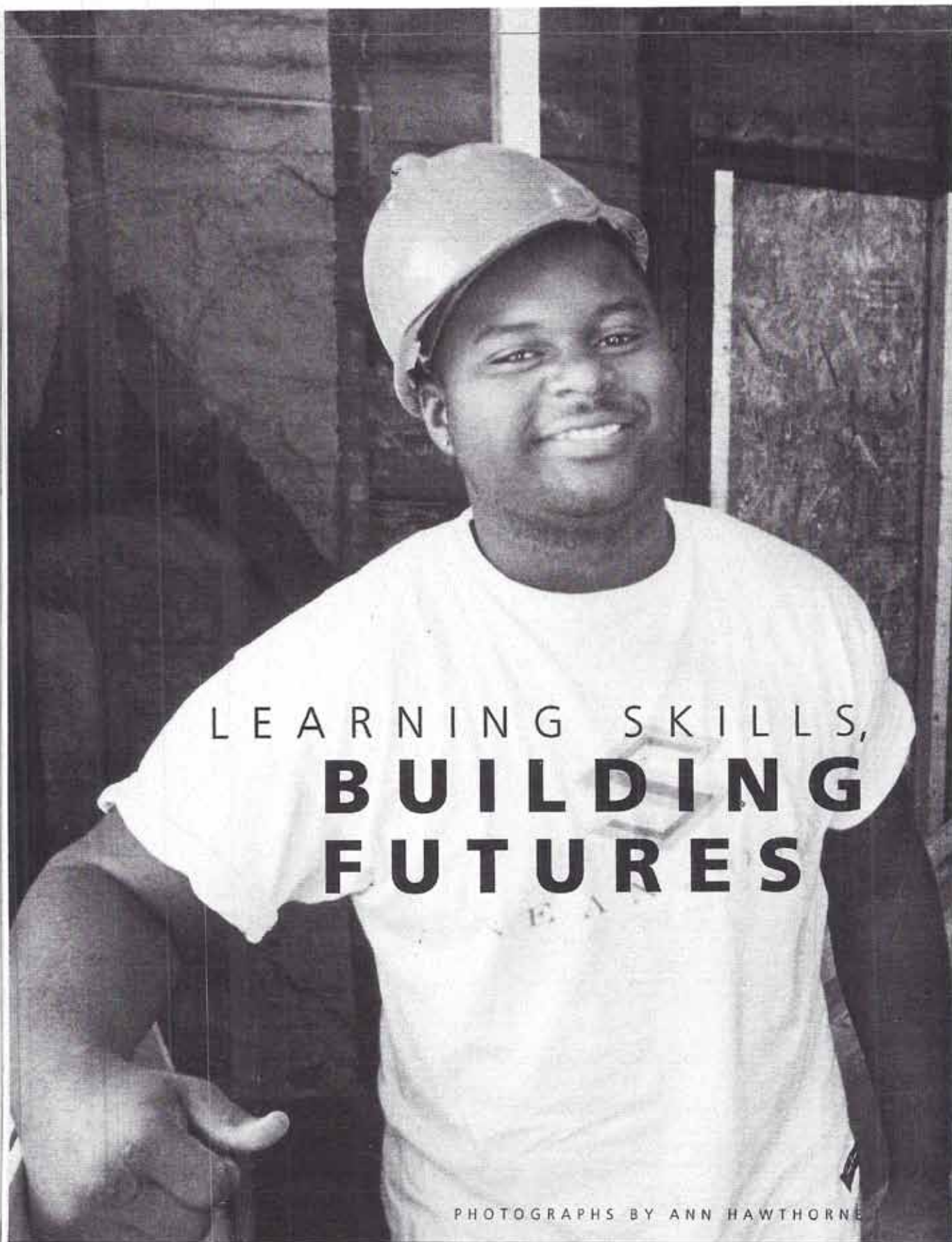
Entrepreneurship Conference  
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Businesses

Literacy Center Puts  
Learning Back on Track

A Life Dedicated  
to Education







LEARNING SKILLS,  
**BUILDING**  
**FUTURES**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANN HAWTHORNE



BY JAMES E. CASTO

MAYBE KENNETH FOX SR. SAYS IT BEST. YOUTHBUILD, FOX SAYS, "HAS BEEN A BIG PLUS AROUND HERE. IT'S PUT SOME REAL 'OOMPH' IN OUR COMMUNITY."

A 71-YEAR-OLD RETIRED RAILROADER AND CHAIRMAN OF A LOCAL CIVIC GROUP, FOX NOW SPENDS MUCH OF HIS TIME WORKING ON COMMUNITY PROJECTS IN HIS NATIVE FAYETTE COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA. ONE OF THOSE PROJECTS IS THE YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM, OPERATED BY THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN LABOR SCHOOL (SALS), HEADQUARTERED IN KINCAID.

**Y**outhBuild takes unemployed young people age 16 to 24 and puts them to work repairing dilapidated homes and building new ones. They spend one week on a job site, then the next week in school, either studying for a general equivalency diploma (GED) or, if they already have a high school diploma, brushing up on their math or reading skills to prepare them for college or technical training.

"It's truly a win-win situation for all involved," says John David, long-time SALS director and one of its founders. "The youngsters get some useful skills and some direction in their life. The people in the community get better housing."

YouthBuild is a national organization that traces its roots to New York City in 1978, when a group of teenagers, under the leadership of Dorothy Stoneman, then the director of a Harlem youth program, renovated an abandoned tenement. That successful project prompted the organization of a local coalition seeking to replicate its success. Ten years later, in 1988, the program expanded nationwide. Today, there are 145 YouthBuild programs operating in 43 states. Since 1993, those

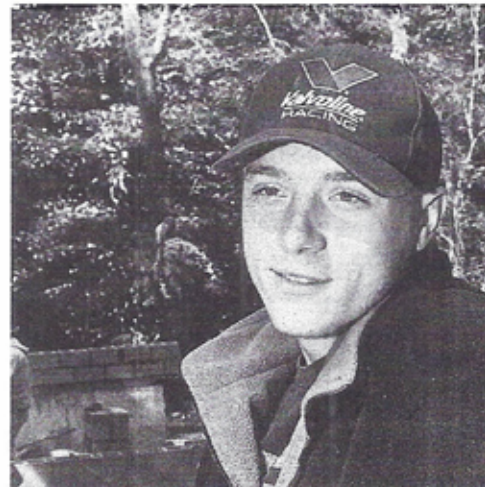
programs have built or reconstructed more than 2,000 units of low-cost housing.

The SALS program in Fayette County is one of four YouthBuild programs in West Virginia. The others are in Charleston, Elkins, and Morgantown.

YouthBuild works closely with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which awards grants to local YouthBuild programs. "This is a program that has produced lots of good results," says Peter C. Minter, a community builder with HUD in its Charleston, West Virginia, office. "It helps give youngsters a trade, an education, and, perhaps most importantly, a sense of what it takes to make it in this world."

#### **Putting It All Together**

YouthBuild is only the latest chapter in the efforts of the Southern Appalachian Labor School, which got its start with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education in 1978. Originally the group's mission was worker education; it later shifted to adult literacy, with a special emphasis on aiding the region's coal miners. In the late 1980s, however, as



*In Fayette County, West Virginia, the Southern Appalachian Labor School's YouthBuild program, part of a national effort, puts unemployed young people to work building and renovating low-cost housing while they continue or resume their education.*

*(ABOVE) Kenry Taylor says he enrolled in the YouthBuild program to find a better life.*

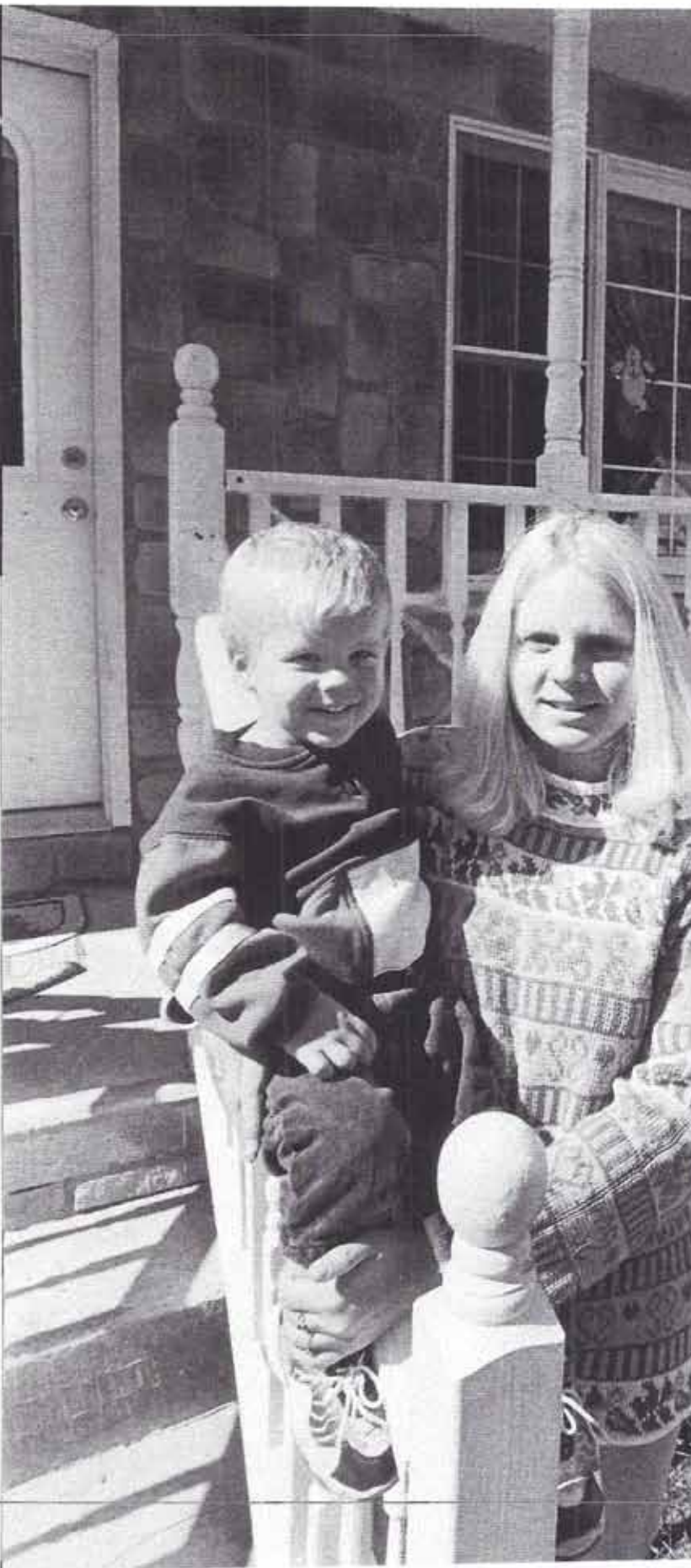
*(OPPOSITE PAGE) Since joining YouthBuild, Brian Cunningham has made plans to attend college.*



“I’ve seen this  
program  
do wonderful  
things.”

coal mines in the region closed and unemployment climbed, SALS broadened its mission to include a broad range of community development programs.

Several youth-based programs were started during this period. One was a cooperative effort between SALS and the Fayette-Plateau Vocational Technical School that resulted in vocational students and volunteers doing housing improvement projects in the local area. From this, the next logical step was the YouthBuild grant, which SALS received from HUD in 1997. Other funding for the program has come from the West Virginia Housing Development Fund, the Fayette County school







system, the Pittsburgh-based Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, area banks, the United Way, and other agencies. Local businesses help by providing free or low-cost building materials. YouthBuild has also benefited from West Virginia's Neighborhood Investment Program, which gives tax breaks to companies and individuals who support nonprofits with donations of \$500 or more.

"This isn't any big magical thing," says project director Kathryn South. "Everything here is basic stuff, but we put it together in a way that the kids can get at it. . . . This way, success and education and doing better and all those things aren't floating out there as big ideas that nobody knows how to start. It's the first step."

The young participants are paid a stipend for the time they're on the job site, then a flat \$50 a week for the time they're in the classroom. The two sums are averaged and the youths are given a paycheck twice a month. Otherwise, says Vickie Smith, the program's construction manager, some might be tempted to show up for the better-paying

weeks on the job and skip the lesser-paying—and generally unpopular—weeks in the classroom.

Most of the youngsters who enroll in YouthBuild are school dropouts, some have addiction problems, and some have had one or more brushes with the law. "They're society's throwaways," says Smith. "But we simply can't afford to keep throwing away our young people." Smith spends her days riding herd on as many as a half-dozen crews, each working on a project somewhere in the county.

*Communities get a double benefit from the YouthBuild program: it teaches young people skills that can lead to jobs, and provides better housing for residents.*

*(LEFT TO RIGHT) YouthBuild construction manager Vickie Smith; new home owner Teresa Shaver and son Cameron in the front yard of their YouthBuild house; crew members Craig Davila (left) and Kenny Taylor work on a house near the town of Wriston.*





Each crew is headed by an adult leader and includes two to five young people, who undertake jobs as simple as patching a leaky roof or as complex as gutting and remodeling an old house or building a completely new one.

### **Building a Better Life**

In a typical day, Smith drives from site to site, checking on the progress of each crew, making sure they have what they need. Along the way she's apt to stop at a business to arrange for some materials or scout out a future site. One recent day, she stops at a house that was deemed too far gone to save. Here the young workers have already demolished the house and are at work cleaning up the block foundation that remains. Asked what prompted him to join YouthBuild, 20-year-old Kenny Taylor says he's determined to find a better life. "You think about it," he says, "and you kind of start to wonder, 'Is this it?' I know I've got to do something better, and I know I'm running out of time."

A quick school visit to confer with Joyce Snead, who teaches the participants when they're not on the job, is followed by lunch at a local café and a meeting there with another work crew. Crew member Brian Cunningham happily confirms a rumor Smith has heard—he's enrolling at Concord College in January.

After lunch there's a brief inspection of the house the crew is rehabilitating, then a visit to a handsome-looking house that, Smith explains, has been fashioned from a wreck that was used as a "crack house" by a local drug dealer. Then, it's off to the town of Page for the dedication of a new house. A little cluster of new homes built at Page—four thus far, with more to

come—represents the program's most ambitious effort thus far. The two- and three-bedroom houses have been built on high block foundations to elevate them out of a flood plain. They're traditional in design, faced with colorful vinyl siding, with inviting porches.

Buyers of the new houses must pass a rigorous screening process, including a credit check, and meet specific income guidelines. But the fortunate few who pass muster enjoy a mortgage based on their ability to pay, not on the price of the house. And at the end of 25 years, the houses will be theirs, free and clear.

The little neighborhood's newest resident, Margaret Black, has an 18-year-old daughter, Kristen, who's a YouthBuild participant. Her next-door neighbor, Teresa Shaver, also a single mother, says she's thrilled by having her own space and privacy. Before moving to her own home, she and her young son lived in an old four-room coal-camp house with her father, brother, and sister.

The new houses bode well for the future of Page, says David. "When people own their own homes, homes that are decent and up to standard, they just start to feel good about themselves, and the community shows it. They plant gardens; they keep things neat." At the same time, David says, those young people who stick with the program also soon begin to feel good about themselves. "Many are bright. They just need some help with that first step up."

Smith says she constantly reminds the participants of what they need to achieve if they're to get her assistance in looking for the kind of full-time job she's been able to help many land. "They know they need three things," she says. "They have to have their GED, they have to be in the program for six months, and they have to be able to pass a drug test."

Patience, Smith says, is the key to success for those in the program: "I've seen this program do wonderful things, if they will just stay in long enough. I've seen kids go from dragging their feet around to picking their heads up because they know they are making something with their hands and making something of their lives. They get it, if they just stay in long enough. They see this is their chance."

*James E. Casto is associate editor of The Herald-Dispatch in Huntington, West Virginia.*

**"They know they are making something with their hands and making something of their lives."**

*YouthBuild is a national organization with 145 programs operating in 43 states. Fayette County's is one of four YouthBuild programs in West Virginia.*

*(OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM) A YouthBuild crew with homeowner Nellie Moore in the community of Ingram Branch; (left to right) Vickie Smith, site supervisor J.R. Williams, and crew members Brian Cunningham and John St. Clair in front of a house undergoing renovation in the town of Pax; Todd Evans (left) and Jonathan Smith work toward their GEDs. Continued education is a requirement of the YouthBuild program.*

