

SALS JOURNAL

*a publication of the
Southern Appalachian Labor School*



Volume 42 Issue 1

www.sals.info

Fall 2019

Wait Till Next Year

by Marcus Wilkes, SALS Board Chair

By now most people will agree the changes in the climate will mean changes in how we live. If flooding and wild fires are bad this year, then wait until next year.

Currently farmland in the Midwest is under threat for catastrophic flooding. There is a historic trend for tornados, and diseases are always a threat. On summer vacations, we must temper our excitement with caution upon the possibility for wildfires and hurricanes.

Southern West Virginia is fortunate in that flooding and landslides have been generally contained this year. Helping agencies, with federal and state programs are busy constructing affordable houses, paving and building roads, and improving community infrastructures in communities with any available resources.

Amid the need for improvements and mitigation programs, there are a deluge of concerns over whether funds are being spent properly, who is doing the work, and whether required work is meeting standards. People must endure the stress of waiting while costly bureaucratic processes continue. Fly-by-night firms take advantage of this process, and other corporations look for opportunities to maximize profits through cost overruns. Needy people must endure the heartache of waiting for results, hoping for promised benefits. Meanwhile, the clock ticks toward the next disaster declaration.

People living in the dozens of poor communities spread throughout southern West Virginia may be left without adequate representation in advocacy for available resources. Fortunately, SALS has been



Marcus Wilkes, SALS Board Chair, speaking to Cornell University students at SALS on a week-long study tour.

lavished with staff and volunteers whose hearts are burnt into the work of helping people where roads are dead ends, or good water is compromised. Roofs on houses may be tar paper, and the mode of transportation is dependent upon which family member or neighbor has enough gas to help them make a doctor's appointment.

Work at SALS is never easy because of the rules that must be followed for needy people to gain access to current programs. Reliance upon federal and state programs has a greater impact but require increased accountability. There are always political antagonists who question the value of public programs, but individual efforts or market forces don't seem to get the job done for affordable housing, or even promoting good nutrition among low income people. It's like asking Big Pharma to police themselves.

SALS stands by its accomplishments in building energy efficient homes, delivering nutrition and education programs to rural populations, transportation services, and advocating on behalf of people whose communities are impacted by negligence, and more.

Continued on page fourteen

Global Volunteers Help Improve Lives in West Virginia

By Brenda Warrick

As a VISTA with the Regina Apartments, I would like to humbly explain why Global Volunteers are imperative to operating a very low income complex with little funding to help it function. Regina is a 24 apartment complex with 20 apartments occupied. The tenants are always telling me to thank Global Volunteers for so many things, that I could write a book on the value we place on our Global Volunteers and the need for more!

Let me explain. Three years ago I brought Global Volunteers to Regina to show them what real poverty actually is... I can remember it just like yesterday. During our trip I explained that "We are all one pay check away from being here at Regina". Looking around I saw some with tears running down their eyes....that was not my intention at all. As we drove out I asked them "What do you see different coming down the road?" I got many answers but none were on to it. Along the road there were American flags hanging from each telephone pole. I explained to them that even though there were many poor families here they were proud, and proud of America. They "always remember to be a proud American" even if it seems futile sometimes, life does go on and you have to make the best of it and remember "You are an American!"

Well it turns out that I ended up in Regina myself to better coordinate the complex. To say the least at first it seemed like I walked into what was like "The Ghetto and Gunsmoke." One of the state Senators told me not to walk but to run out of here because it was the worst complex in the State of West Virginia. However, with the help of Global Volunteers we have turned it around, changed the appearance and helped give "dignity" to residents who don't identify with the concept of being poor. Even if your income is low you can make things happen and I did mean in a good way!

Without Global Volunteers the community garden wouldn't exist this year and that's what a lot of our residents use during the summer. They also preserve the fruits and vegetables for the winter months when things get tough. When folks start feeling their stomach rumble less, we can thank Global Volun-

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Brenda Warrick (left) and Barbara Rich, a Global Volunteer whose article is printed on page six

teers. They have helped us pass inspections with hard work and much laughter. I suppose I can say that we're probably the only apartment complex that has actual goats living on the property (to mow the grass) and the Global Volunteers helped us build the goat houses "to hide them out", said a laughing tenant a twinkle in her eye. This brought much happiness and gave folks the ability to understand that these baby goats were their responsibility to keep alive. It's also bought the complex closer together. Local community members no longer look down on the people that live at the Regina Apartments. In 3 years, police officers have been here only two times compared to as many as 99 calls in 30 days previously.

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

We welcome articles and submissions by our readers.

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Director's Report

by John David

SALS continues to be on a roller coaster. On one hand, the many volunteers from Holy Cross, the Unitarian Community, Global Volunteers, Christian Endeavor, Group Work Camps, and others have been overwhelming. Much was accomplished, including 7 "Disaster Recovery" homes, 7 owner-occupied rehabs, nearly 40 home repairs, and several Self-Help completions. Work also occurred at the Historic Oak Hill School, Regina Three Rivers Apartments, several SALS owned homes, the SALS Community Center Programs and our Farm in Beards Fork. The children's after-school, summer, and summer foods programs went well.

On the development side, we are still attempting to obtain funding for Appalachian Construction Development, a housing panel factory on the BridgeValley Community and Technical College (BVCTC) campus in Montgomery. We are partnering with BVCTC to begin a certificate and A.A.S. program in the Culinary Arts at our Historic Oak Hill School facility, as well as Café HOPE, a "Donate What You Can" restaurant.

On the other hand, we are in a serious financial bind. The number of rejected grants has skyrocketed. This is very disappointing since the need for SALS has skyrocketed at the same time. Fayette County is now classified as "Distressed" by the Appalachian Regional Commission and West Virginia leads the nation with overdose deaths. In our midst, the state reports 10,000 children who are homeless attend public schools and grocery stores have totally disappeared from counties around us.

Many of you have made donations for which we are greatly appreciative. Your support has been heart-warming. But many big grants are missing and they are the pillars of our sustainability. In several cases, awarded grants were rescinded and the other cases legitimate grant expenses have never been reimbursed.

To help us out, we are grateful that Board Chair Marcus Wilkes has agreed to step in and contribute a more involved role in taking advantage of opportunities and providing organizational leadership. As many of you know, Marcus had several

advanced degrees but came to SALS as a University Year for ACTION student majoring in Public Service at West Virginia Tech during the mid-1970's. During that time, SALS was just being formed at WV Tech and UYA was a pilot program in our portfolio, directed by Jan Young with Ruth Lanham.

Many ask what keeps us struggling to survive. The answer is complex. First, it is because you have demonstrated in so many ways confidence in us and have provided both inspiration and appreciation. Second, we are reminded of a quote from Denzel Washington:

"At the end of the day, it's not about what you have or even what you've accomplished ---- it's about who you've lifted up, who you made better. It's about what you've given back".

Please support us as generously as you can. It will make you feel good helping to continue the work of "Making A Difference" for so many in need.



Neveah Lovejoy, an elementary student in Smithers, is happy to receive a Summer Foods lunch from SALS served by Global Volunteers from Roma Moulding in Toronto, Canada, led by CEO Tony Gareri (in background). Global Volunteers have come to SALS over 120 many times now. Our Summer Foods program has provided over 2000 summer meals this past summer at 6 sites in the region.

From the Workbench

by Vickie Smith, construction manager

As usual the housing crews have been busy repairing the numerous rental properties, preparing the Historic Oak Hill School for the volunteers, mowing grass, picking up donations, painting the dining area of the school, transporting broken down vehicles, picking up trash from offices and rental units, picking up food for our monthly food pantry, patching the school roof, moving all the kitchen appliances to have new flooring installed, setting up rental areas in the school for various events and in between all that doing rehabs of homes in the community.

Several of the youth were able to get their food handlers cards and many are still attending class to complete their GED/TASC test. Several are looking into taking additional classes such as HVAC training and additional Pre-Apprenticeship Certificate classes.

I have been busy with meetings, helping homeowners complete their paperwork for our repair programs, doing inspections on homes as repairs progress, ordering materials for various sites, obtaining building permits, scheduling work sites, obtaining bids from various contractors and of course doing write ups and estimates for our funders. A couple times a month I pay the organizations bills. I must admit writing checks takes considerable time.

We are also working on two new homes for our coalfield housing project. These homes will be energy star certified and offer affordable housing. There will be an eight-hour housing class offered for those interested in the homes. The homes are based on income and are very affordable. The average payment for those who qualify usually is under \$400.00 a month which includes taxes and insurance. If anyone is interested in applying, please call 304.250.7627 and ask for applications for new housing.

Housing Update

by Terry Black

In the past six months I have been working with those in YouthBuild on a community service project of repurposing the Historic Oak Hill School's cafeteria and installing new restrooms. The youth doing SALS Journal



GroupWorkcamp members put new coat of paint on a home being refurbished for the residents

the job are Anthony Toney, Alicia Biggs, Cheyenne Biggs, and Dylan Hubbard.

The work has also included new flooring in the dining area, which meant moving everything out of the kitchen so that we could also get new flooring for the kitchen. I showed them the correct way to install rubber baseboard using adhesive and the hot glue gun. They also learned how to cut the rubber properly in order to achieve a clean look.

In addition, we have also been repurposing the new conference room by painting and patching holes and building in a new sink. We also put the portable hot bar and refrigerator in the room for food on special occasions.

The crew has also been doing updates to the second floor. In the auditorium, thanks to a donation, we have added new rows of chairs and replaced old wooden seats, replaced ceiling tiles and patched roof leaks. We painted rooms, set up bunk rooms for the volunteers, and installed new shower heads. All of this has been in addition to working on various rehab jobs and assessing more homes to be started. I have also worked along with our volunteers and would like to thank them for all of their hard work. We are glad to have them at our site.

Finally, I would like to congratulate some of our YouthBuild members for their completion of our Pre-

Apprenticeship Training, namely Alicia Biggs, Cheyenne Biggs, Austin Flint, Dylan Hubbard, Leonard Higginbotham, Zachary Moore, Rene Morris, Joseph Shongo, Sam Slater, Justin Turley, Anthony Toney, Casey Hall, Sulyna Goodson, Brandon Sims, and Cameron Smith.

VISTA Reflections

by Austin Flint

Hello, this is Austin. Since I last wrote SALS has been really busy. I have helped coordinate the YouthBuild members working on handicapped bathrooms. This included overseeing youth while they did everything from framing to drywall and also plumbing and electrical. I also oversaw a couple of the YouthBuild on a home repair site where they laid flooring, installed the new water lines and fixed a door. The youth were also organized to lay flooring and replace trim on yet another one of our sites, which previously received a remodeled bathroom to make it more handicap accessible.

Social Services and Training

by Barbara Painter

Happy Summer all! This has been a busy and delightful spring! We have watched students graduate at our Historic Oak Hill School from ages 4 and up to GED students, it is delightful to see those just starting school to those completing their education. Some will be going on to kindergarten while some will be transitioning on to college! Some of the SALS youth earned their GED---go SALS! We are proud of these students. The youth spent a lot of time preparing the auditorium for the event!

The dining room and gym at the school has been rented for a lot of activities this summer. It has kept everyone busy keeping it clean and set up for events!

We have had 28 Certificates earned by different students for HBI (Home Builders Institute). We have several more working on theirs. I will be teaching classes soon to finish them.

I continue working with the volunteers---I want to than each and every one of them for helping with the Helen M. Powell food pantry at the Historic Oak Hill School; we continue to serve between 100 and 125 families per month. It is interesting to see how these appreciate what we do and need the food. But the main thing is how they live from day to day. One little boy was patiently waiting in line and was so mannerly that we gave him a book to read. You would have thought we gave him a million dollars! It made me so happy! Most people think that the only time to give to a food pantry is during the Holiday Season, but these people need food all year long, not just one time a year---please donate to your local food pantries, they help so many families.

My nickname from volunteering at Collins Middle School is "The Reader Lady". Knowing that, please take time to read to your child. It helps them learn and they will never forget you reading to them. If you have free time, volunteer. It is very rewarding and SALS uses volunteers a lot!

Inside View

by Jessi Parker

Since the New Year, we have had a lot of things happening around SALS Historic Oak Hill School. The handicapped bathrooms are finished. The kitchen and dining area have been remodeled with new floors and fresh paint. Now that Summer is here we are hosting 2019 summer volunteers, summer foods program and various other projects for this summer. The second floor is getting some well needed upgrades, including fresh paint. We have had some small groups that have come which was a new experience for many of them. Many volunteers have helped our YouthBuild members with some of the houses in progress which has helped us and been an unforgettable experience for them.

Until next time be good and humble.

Housing

James Harvey

I am coordinating YouthBuild crew that has been working on Carolyn Coleman's residence. The crew gutted and replaced bathroom walls, floor, and bath. Then they jacked up outside walls in the living room, replaced underpinning, and put in a new outside door, which also had to be jacked up. The crew

was taught how to upgrade the electrical service entrance and breaker box. Then the YouthBuild crew installed new gable ends and then soffits and fascia along the roof of the house. They also had a little bit of floor to replace in the second bathroom. The YouthBuild members did an awesome job and they can't wait for next site. Sad to say, 5 of my YouthBuild crew has moved on and got better jobs but that is what this program is all about. Congratulations Joseph Shongo, Curtis Martin, Eric Hodge, Nick Edwards and Justin Turley. You will be missed.

A New Day, A New Season

by Kenna Bass & William Austin

A new growing season is upon us and we're excited to do better than we did last year. All repairs and preparations have been made to the garden area, plants have been planted, materials for the solar implementation had begun to arrive. Community and visiting volunteers have been such a great help. We would not have accomplished all that we have if not for their help. To the volunteers...Thank you!

During the earlier part of this quarter not much could be done so we were busy working on other things, attending meetings, etc. During this time Kenna was asked to write the new VISTA project proposal addressing the drug problem affecting our communities. She was doubtful but she followed



through with it. She wrote a proposal on Drug Recovery...a program that will help those trying to stay clean and families affected by this epidemic. Kenna received word that her proposal was approved..to her amazement. We're so proud of her and her accomplishment. Just goes to show that you

Fresh produce harvested from the gardens at Beards Fork

never know what you're capable of until you try.

Personal Reflections on Volunteering at SALS

by Barbara Rich, Global Volunteer

With just one week to interact, respond, support, learn and dive into the many different aspects of SALS, I was astonished that so much is being done by so many: so many local volunteers, mentors, teenagers.

As one of the Global Volunteers paired with local volunteers at Energy Express, and Feed and Read, it was clear that what I was told about SALS didn't come close to describing what sitting with the children at breakfast, playing tic-tac-toe or drawing, my heart filled to overflowing.

It didn't seem to matter who I was or where I came from. Shyteil, Tia, Bailey, Shelby and many of the children all welcomed me unconditionally. Shyteil has helped to create a safe, caring, learning experience, and when he tells the children to sit down, stop talking, and listen to their mentor, they do just that! I witnessed him asking for and getting everyone's respect.

Having participated in other Global Volunteer programs in and outside America, I found SALS to be unique. John David and Artie Mullins inspire through their wise conversations about SALS history, by their excellent organizational skills, by their kindness, and because of their sense of humor.

Brenda Warrick is not only a superb cook, but a delightful, knowledgeable tour guide, and masterful storyteller. (She went out of her way to make sure I had a vegetarian option for dinner every night. That was a real gift!)

Brenda's devotion to Regina Three Rivers Apartments in Gauley Bridge has made it a model community with everyone looking out for their neighbors. This is an inspiring event. It inspires me to attempt the same level of work where I live in Massachusetts in case I need something similar as I approach age 86! Brenda, you are a treasure!

Kenna has endless energy, and the generosity to drive to so many families she knows well, making sure they got the food donated by Feed and Read, as well as pizza donated freely by Little Caesar's

The smiles from these families I'm sure are

enough of a thank-you for Kenna. It was a pleasure to ride along with her every day and hear her stories about people with whom she has grown up. And she has the awesome energy and commitment to keep the beautiful gardens at the Energy Express/Global Volunteer back yard producing healthy vegetables, as well as keeping the pigs, hens, rooster, ducks and 4 new goats well fed and well cared for. Kenna, you rock! And so do Jessi and Grayson! It was a real privilege listening to them telling stories about their lives.

Some of the Global Volunteers, (adults and children alike), worked to rehab Boomer house, and from the photos, they accomplished a lot! It's wonderful knowing their work will be carried on to completion. Brenda said it needs to get done, looked John David in the eye, and it's getting done! Even though we only had one week, being in Beards Fork, Montgomery, and Oak Hill, on mountain roads, on one-way streets, in and out of the white van. In all it felt like being with family.

Editor's Note: Barbara Rich, who is a spry 85 years and lives in Massachusetts, spent a week in July as a Global Volunteer serving the SALS community.. Her picture with Brenda is on page two.

SALS YouthBuild

by Kathryn South

This spring SALS has hosted several volunteer groups that have served alongside our youth. Global Volunteers has sent several teams this year so far and about six teams are scheduled throughout the year.

Three YouthBuild members received the TASC certificate or GED. Congrats to those youth members. The members have done community service by working on two new bathrooms in the Historic Oak Hill School.

Congrats also to six youth that have graduated from YouthBuild and are now employed in the area working for a paving company. They are making a good deal more than minimum wage.

SALS was saddened by the passing of a long-time friend of the organization. Angela Hanson who has worked as our Workforce partner for about ten years or more. Angie was always in our corner and was truly a great lady. Her staff at Workforce will miss her greatly and so will we.

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Volunteers remove shingles from the roof of a local home during one of SALS housing projects. SALS was recognized last month with the FAHE Voice of the Region Award for the work it does through its housing programs.

See Fayette Tribune article on pages 12 & 13.

SALS is still recruiting youth between the ages of 17 and 24 for the YouthBuild program. We need about 30 youth to complete our commitment for this grant.

After School Program Returns to Beards Fork Community Center

by Latoya Ray

We enjoyed black history month with the kids and working with after school kids who put a lot of time into presentations. Jadah and I had a running group this year for the after school kids. 'Active WV' from Oak Hill came and trained with us.

At the end of the After-school program we had 2 incentive trips; skating and a trip to Dairy Queen, to reward the children for good behavior, and improvement in their academics. The children have worked very hard this past year and deserve recognition for their focus and cooperation. We want our children to stick together and be able to gain skills to take into their careers.

Now we're back to school again and back into the After School program.

We desire to continue serving our community, and we ask that you help us make our community better. It is very important to give back, and we ask for your continuous support by a generous donation.

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March for Minden Re-enacts 1989 March

*Excerpted from Beckley Register Herald, 6/7/19
see: https://www.register-herald.com/news/march-for-minden-re-enacts-march/article_9f0d1a03-81a4-5bcf-852d-d140f8f99ce6.html for complete article*

A re-enactment of a 1989 march for the contaminated Fayette County community of Minden set for Saturday, June 8, is drawing an internationally recognized environmental rights figure and the same civil rights group that worked with Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr.

For the family of the late Lucian Randall of Minden and others, the march at Minden will also commemorate Minden residents whose lives were lost to cancer and will honor the local people who pushed the federal government in the 1980s and 1990s to offer aid to residents of Minden, where workers at the now-defunct Shaffer's Equipment Co. had dumped the carcinogenic industrial chemical PCB on the ground, sprayed it on the roads, handed it out for use as fuel and improperly stored it in mines surrounding the area, according to Shaffer's workers.

There have been three clean-up efforts in Minden by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and none have fully removed the contamination.

In May, EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler announced that Shaffer's would finally be added to the National Priority List (NPL) of Superfund sites, clearing the way for more studies and more federal money.

Minden Community Action, the grassroots group which arranged the Saturday march, said that it is important for the community to march to to honor Minden residents like Randall, Larry Rose, Sue Workman and others who were the first wave to actively push the EPA to help the community.

"I would like to encourage everyone to come and march and show their support for the community, the cause or even in remembrance or honor of someone they may know from Minden," Annetta Coffman, a Minden resident and member of Minden Community Action, said Friday. "This (march) is a very important stepping stone for Minden to show that even after 30 years, we haven't given up on justice for our town and will continue to fight for what we deserve, which is to
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Love Canal activist Lois Gibbs addresses the crowd at the post march rally

be relocated to a clean, safe environment.

"No one can assure us 100 percent that a fourth clean-up will be the final clean-up and that we can live safe, without worry of anyone else dying from cancer related to illnesses due to PCBs."

Dr. Ayne Amjad and Sen. Stephen Baldwin, D-Greenbrier, have pushed state health officials to keep a more accurate count of cancer deaths in the state, after Minden residents and the late Dr. Hassan Amjad have counted an extremely high number of deaths among current and former Minden residents.

State health officials report that the cancer death rate in Minden is much lower, according to official record-keeping, and that state statistics that showed Minden residents dying of cancer at twice the rate of others in Fayette County were not statistically reliable.

The march has also drawn Lois Gibbs, "the mother of Superfund," to Minden. Gibbs, a primary organizer of the Love Canal Homeowners Association that forced federal officials to take note of deadly contamination in Love Canal, N.Y., in the early 1980s, Gibbs visited Minden in 2017 to oppose a multi-million dollar, state-supported sewer project that is being conducted in Minden by the City of Oak Hill and Thrasher Engineering, a company owned by Republican gubernatorial candidate Woody Thrasher.

The sewer project aims to clean the New River and Arbuckle Creek, but Minden residents have said they are getting sick from contaminants in the soil that are becoming airborne due to construction. Residents of the working class and racially diverse community say they also live in constant fear of additional PCB contamination so that Oak Hill residents may have a better sewer system and the state tourism industry may flourish. Gibbs joined Minden residents in opposing the sewer project, calling it "criminal."

The Highlander Research and Education

Center, an Alabama organization which trained “the mother of civil rights” Rosa Parks, will have a presence at the March for Minden.

Local award-winning jazz musician and entertainer Doris “Lady D” Fields will perform for marchers.

A photo of the late Lucian Randall at the original march, pushing a barrel of the type used to store PCB oil at Shaffer’s, appeared in The Fayette Tribune in 1989. Randall was a core member of Concerned Citizens to Save Fayette County, the activist group that started the fight against toxic PCB dumping in the 1980s and 1990s.

Randall is seen pushing a barrel in images and videos of the original March for Minden in the original march.

Randall’s sister, Queen Esther Wallace, 83, said that Randall was a family-oriented coal miner who loved to sing. After falling in Arbuckle Creek and becoming ill, he became concerned about PCBs contaminating the waterway.

He conducted a large amount of personal research on PCB after becoming ill with what he believed was caused by PCB exposure. He would later join the Concerned Citizens to Save Fayette County, writing countless letters to government officials. He was a leader of the 1989 march.

When asked what Randall would think of the 2019 march, Wallace said her brother would “be right in it” if he were alive.

Randall lived at the home of his relative, Percy Fruit, prior to his 1995 death. Like Randall, many in the Fruit family lived close to Shaffer’s and developed cancers, including fatal cancers.

Eddie Fruit, Percy Fruit’s brother, will be push-



Marchers re-enact the original 1989 March for Minden included friends and relatives of many of the original marchers who have died from cancers.

ing a barrel in today’s march to honor Randall, according to a press release from Minden Community Action.

“The work they started, we are still fighting for,” said Eddie Fruit in the press release. “Lucian was caring enough to walk for better living for people in Minden.

“My mother worked for Shaffer’s. She died of cancer. My three brothers all had cancer,” he added. “I just have to put my faith in God to push me on down the road.”

Editor’s note: SALS was the organization that founded Concerned Citizens of Fayette Co. and spearheaded their initial efforts.

Organizers on the Facebook page said that a motorcade of vehicles will follow marchers, ensuring that those who cannot walk the entire route may participate in the march. Note: Face book live videos and pictures of the march and rally are here: www.facebook.com/events/306755903321722/?active_tab=discussion

In Memoriam - Larry Rose

Larry Rose passed away August 13th at his home. He is survived by his wife Sharon.

Larry was the first Board Chair of SALS and also chaired Concerned Citizens to Save Fayette County when he helped organize the first March for Minden 20 years ago.

Also many years ago, he was John David’s work study assistant at WV Institute of Technology, where both he and Sharon graduated.

Larry became a teacher at Park Junior High in Beckley, where he organized one of the first American Federation of Teachers (AFT) locals in West Virginia. He also was a labor studies adjunct professor for Dr. David’s department at WV Institute of Technology.



Marchers and automobile caravan assemble in town of Minden by the old company store.

Housing Specialist Update

by Lisa Manley

Hello this is Lisa from the SALS office in Kincaid, AKA as the Raynes Building.

We have been extremely busy finishing up grants involving home repairs.

We worked on 12 houses for the USDA Self-Help program. This program required the home owners to do a minimum of 125 hours of work on their own homes. This allowed them to not only get their homes repaired but the home owner also learned basic repairs which they can now do on their own if they need to. Saves them money.

Group Workcamp was based in East Bank this year. Thanks to the hundreds of volunteers with this group, 45-50 homes in the upper Kanawha Valley and some parts of Fayette County received free home repairs. The camp only lasted for a week, but the impact of what they accomplish will be felt for a long, long time. Many of the homeowners are elderly and simply do not have the money or ability to do the work themselves. The work was greatly appreciated.

We also had 7 houses we could repair if the houses were affected by the 2016 flood which caused 12 counties in WV to be declared disaster areas. Fayette County was one of them. With a grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank/Pittsburgh with United Bank SALS was able to restore and repair these homes and make the trauma of this natural disaster a little better to deal with.

Next we worked on the FHLB/Pittsburgh and United Bank REHABs. These will be finished soon. Weather and shortage of supplies caused delays so it seemed like all of these houses need to be done at once. But Vickie Smith, the supervisors, crews and contractors rallied around and got the jobs done.

Also, SALS was approved for Summer Associate VISTAs. The VISTAs will be going out into communities and recruiting volunteers and coordinating with apartment managers to make sure any kids under 18 will have a healthy lunch and not fall behind in reading during the summer break from school.

The full time VISTAs have been approved for another year with a large part of their service consisting of organizing support groups for not just individuals fighting addiction but also their families. This will be an ongoing process. It didn't become an epidemic overnight and it will not go away overnight. The more people involved in the battle the better chance of winning the war on addiction.

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Director John David (holding award) with Group Workcamps National Program Director Mike Krantz (left) and Jori Tarjan, Site Coordinator.



Community Health

by Vickie Mullins

SALS had the recent pleasure of hosting several programs in Fayette County. One, called RAZE, which was held in Beards Fork, helped introduce children to tobacco prevention and made them aware of the harmfulness of smoking and what it can do to your lungs and body including cancer, heart failure, emphysema, and many chronic diseases.

We were the only RAZE site in Fayette County that was not in a local school. RAZE is for middle-school-age kids to let family and friends know that smoking is harmful to their bodies. We received the grant about three years ago, and the kids have enjoyed it. We would like to continue our program in the future by making sure folks in the community are aware that all tobacco is harmful, as well as giving them flyers, pamphlets, and other information to encourage them to quit using tobacco.

In Remembrance of Jim Branson

My partner Jim Branson died early this morning from Lewy Body Dementia. He was a lifelong socialist fighter and a trade unionist.

He worked in slaughterhouses and steel mills; underground coal mines and as a grassroots, cultural, and union organizer in West Virginia, Kentucky, and Texas. Always physically courageous and an organic intellectual, he committed body and mind to the Mead Paper Strike, the Brookside Miners' Strike, the Massey Strike, the Pittston Coal Strike, the Southern Organizing Committee's work on environmental justice, the campaign for single payer health care, the March to Save Blair Mountain, and union organizing drives in West Virginia, Kentucky, and Texas.

Jim wrote poems and pamphlets. His last job was with the Texas State Employees Union TSEU-CWA 6186.

He learned from Jack O'Dell, Jim Garland, Anne Braden, and Don West. He disliked bosses and authority figures. He stayed in jobs long enough to struggle with them and never long enough to move ahead.

In a more just society he would have been a leader. In this one he was proud to be a foot soldier.

Jim believed that every person who resisted, who organized, who helped build a new and better world was his sister and brother. He would invite all who remember him to join the struggle.

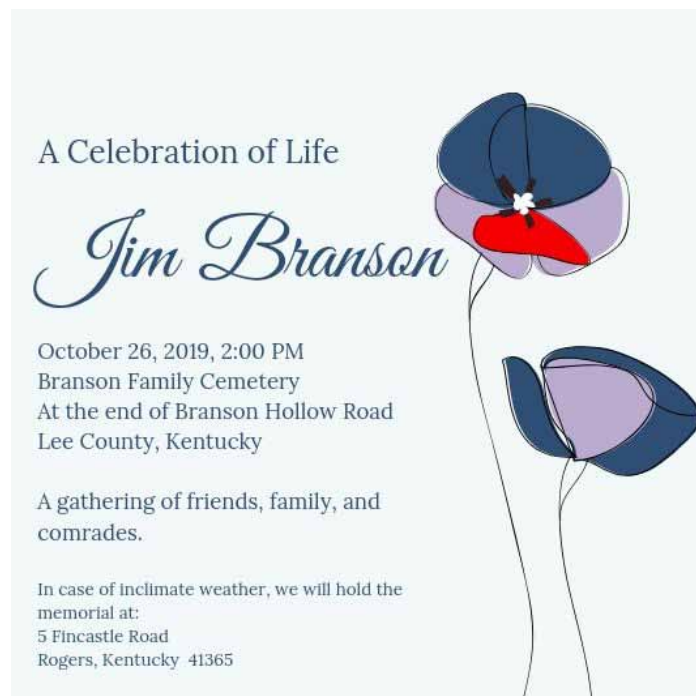
We will celebrate his life in Austin this September and in the mountains of Kentucky probably in October. All are welcome.

We celebrate this moment in history that recognizes that Jim's only defeat was his death, and applaud all who read this. Jim Branson ¡Presenté!
Anne Lewis

Thoughts on Jim from Thandabantu

The oppressed, exploited and resistant peoples of the United States have lost a remarkable working-class activist and intellectual, James Branson. I knew Jim for over twenty years, and it was one the abiding honors of my life to work with him in political organizations as well as the coal mines of West Virginia. Jim was one of the most sincere, thoughtful, bold, and fearless embodiments of anti-racist humanity I have ever known. In this despicable and dispiriting time of white supremacy, misogyny, and liberal political reaction, we will do well to pause and reflect on a

SALS Journal



*Jim Branson is also remembered as one of
SALS original organizers*

few aspects of Jim's life.

During the 1970s I learned about a fearless worker named Jim Branson when I was working in the Southern Conference Education Fund. I met Jim when I had become a fledgling writer for the Southern Struggle, the SCEF newspaper.

SCEF was supporting Jim at that time because he was under indictment for having defended other coal miners and their families who had been threatened by the goons working to destroy trade unionism and workers' resistance in Harlan County, Ky.

Jim believed, quite simply, that workers have a human right to self-defense, as well as the human right to build unions to improve our lives and livelihoods. He boldly armed himself, and exercised those rights. Jim was facing serious jail time; yet when I met him, I was struck by his consciousness and composure, as well as his humility.

To me, Jim Branson will always stand as one of the most clear-sighted and humane anti-racists who ever worked to build principled unity between workers of different racial-ethnic groupings. Jim was not only a worker, but also an incisive intellectual deeply passionate about saving and celebrating the rich culture of workers in the Appalachian regions. Long before I met him, he had dedicated himself wholly to the organization and liberation of members of the working class across this country and the world. We will have to keep going without Jim, but the lessons of his humble visionary activism will shed light as we press on through these dark times. Comrade James Branson, ¡Presenté!

SALS honored for service in Appalachia

By Cheryl Keenan
The Fayette Tribune

BEARDS FORK — The Southern Appalachian Labor School has a more than four decade history of serving the residents of Fayette County and the Upper Kanawha Valley. Recently the organization was recognized for its work through its housing programs.

John David, director of the Southern Appalachian Labor School, announced in a press release that the local organization has been honored by FAHE, previously known as the Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises.

At its annual meeting last month in Knoxville, Tennessee, the regional organization presented the Southern Appalachian Labor School with its FAHE Voice of the Region Award for raising awareness of the issues facing Appalachia and its continuous presence in local media.

“SALS has been a great partner in keeping FAHE up-to-date on their programs and celebrations, which in turn provides us with the stories we utilize to uplift and highlight the FAHE Network to the rest of the country,” Vonda Poynter, FAHE membership director, said in the release.

“SALS keeps us informed through the sharing of newspaper articles, editorials or clips from WAGE Radio about its continuing work in West Virginia.”

FAHE President Jim King praised SALS for its work in providing housing opportunities for area residents.

“As a regional membership organization of affordable housing providers in Central Appalachia, FAHE has long been proud to include SALS as one of its members.

“In our near 40-year history, we have worked hand-in-hand with this organization to provide appropriate affordable housing opportunities in their West Virginia service area,” he said.

FAHE works with more than 50 nonprofits across the Appalachian portions of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, Alabama and Maryland, as well as West Virginia which is wholly contained within the Appalachian SALS Journal

region. FAHE uses its “expertise in finance, collaboration, innovation, advocacy and communication to achieve a more prosperous Appalachian region,” according to its website at fahe.org.

“The Southern Appalachian Labor School is extremely honored to have received this award,” David said. “It is a tribute to the great work contributed by those with SALS who work together on various needs with many others to ‘Make a Difference’ in the areas we serve.”

Among the housing programs operated by SALS either on its own or in conjunction with others entities and organizations are the following, according to the local organization’s website at sals.info.

- **New River Safe Housing** — Provides rehabilitation to dilapidated and energy-inefficient homes for low income families in economically devastated rural coalfield communities, primarily in the Fayette County portion of the Central Appalachian Empowerment Zone, which is comprised of parts of Fayette, Nicholas and Clay counties. Work ranges from substantial rehabilitations to weatherization, roofing, windows, doors and insulation.

- **New Page Housing** — A housing development for low income families in the former coal camp community of Page, constructed with Youth-Build communities from colleges, faith-based work camps and Global Volunteers.

- **Coalfield Housing** — Similar to New River Safe Housing, this program is primarily in the Fayette County part of the Upper Kanawha Valley Enterprise Community. It also includes work on abandoned homes obtained with tax credits through the West Virginia Neighborhood Investment Program and donations through the HUD Dollar Housing Program.

- **HOME Program** — SALS constructs homes and qualifies families for financing through the West Virginia Housing Development Fund. Certified counselors assist families in preparing and processing their applications.

- **Housing Emergency Loan Program (HELP)** — SALS assists income-eligible families to become

eligible for special loans through the West Virginia Housing Development Fund.

- **Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO)** — As a certified CHDO, SALS is eligible to obtain funds through the West Virginia Housing Development Fund for special projects that assist the housing programs.

- **USDA-RD Rural Housing Service and SALS** — SALS and USDA have a long and productive relationship with Housing Preservation Grant, Self-Help, and 502/504 Housing programs.

USDA has an impressive record for building strong relationships with lenders, home builders, community development organizations, non-profits, and housing finance authorities to provide better housing for very-low, low, and moderate-income individuals in rural areas. Last year, USDA invested \$19.5 billion to help more than 148,500 rural families buy or make repairs and safety upgrades to their homes. Lisa Manley, a SALS housing specialist, explains that SALS contributes to this number by being a HUD-approved Housing Counseling Agency, a USDA Loan Packager, and West Virginia’s only USDA Self-Help program.

In southern West Virginia, SALS has assembled an impressive record with affordable rural housing for low-income families. According to David, SALS has rehabilitated over 200 homes, constructed 25 new homes, repaired over 1000, and rebuilt an apartment complex with 24 units.

Vickie Smith, SALS construction manager, says the immense economic contribution and the improvement of living conditions in the area is impossible to calculate.

SALS traces its roots to West Virginia Tech where David, David Greene, Bill McCabe and David Morris began an extension program of labor-related courses for workers and their families as part of the Department of Social Sciences. Early grants came from the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education, OSHA, National Science

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Foundation, and the University Year in ACTION. West Virginia Tech at that time was heavily involved in War on Poverty programs that included affordable housing, community organizing, business incubators, legal services, and Black Lung counseling. Thus, the Center for Labor Education, as it was then called, was a natural fit.

In 1981, the Center was renamed as SALS and became a community-based non-profit organization headquartered in a donated building in Chelyan. When it burned, SALS obtained the former Beards Fork Elementary School, which had been closed and was in serious disrepair. With AmeriCorps help, SALS fixed the building, installed new HVAC, and began a community center component that continues to this day.

SALS also owns and operates a second old school building, the Historic Oak Hill School, which formerly housed Oak Hill Elementary School on School Street. Housing programs, a cafeteria, WAGE Radio, a library and much more are housed in the Historic Oak Hill School.

• • •

A number of major organizations work with SALS each year in housing repair and other programs.

One such is the Global Volunteers, an international volunteer service program. The organization, based in Minnesota, matches volunteers up with service opportunities around the world, including China, Cook Islands, Cuba, Ecuador, Greece, Italy, Nepal, Peru, Poland, Portugal, St. Lucia, Tanzania and Vietnam.

The organization's website (www.globalvolunteers.org) claims the "highest-rated volunteer abroad programs since 1984."

Global Volunteers offers "one-, two- and three-week opportunities to create, nurture and sustain the well-being of the world's children and their families. You're welcomed into homes, classrooms, clinics, community centers, hospitals, orphanages, childcare centers, libraries, government offices, farm fields and more on exceptional international service and learning programs."

The organization does, however, work with three communities within the United States: the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana, the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, and the Appalachian location — the

Southern Appalachian Labor School in Fayette County.

Global Volunteers who choose to visit Appalachia are involved in building repair and rehabilitation, after-school and GED tutoring, the Energy Express summer enrichment program, radio broadcasts and a community garden.

Among those volunteering in Fayette County this year was Mike Meixler, who enjoyed the experience. Sharing from his journal with the Global Volunteers, he wrote, "Thought of the day: We're a far-flung group of people, from all over the western hemisphere — as far north as Canada, as far south as Brazil, as far west as California. We're of different backgrounds, different nationalities, we have different political ideas, and none of us had met each other before Saturday. But, we all came here to Beards Fork, and here we eat together, live together, and work together — as a small community. And, as a small community, we've accomplished a great deal in these past few days for this larger community that we're part of in Beards Fork and Oak Hill. It's remarkable what can be accomplished when people put their differences aside and focus on the job in front of them."

According to Peter Kelly, U.S. coordinator for Global Volunteers, SALS has hosted 119 teams totaling about 1,450 volunteers over the past 25 years.

Christian Endeavor, based in Pennsylvania, is a youth discipleship organization which believes that young people "have the potential to make an incredible impact on their generation and in their world," according to the group's website at www.ceworks.faith.

"Since 1881, we've been inspiring, equipping and encouraging churches in student discipleship. Our approach isn't revolutionary (you don't need another gimmick or add-on to your ministry), it's tangible, intentional and biblical. ...

"Because of the pervasive cultural norm of expecting very little of our young people, their abilities and God-given potential often remain buried — undiscovered and underutilized," the group says on its site.

Domestically, Christian Endeavor hosts mission trips to SALS and to New Castle, Pennsylvania.

The group has sent at least 1000 people to volunteer in Fayette County for about a decade, according to David.

Group Work Camps, operating under the umbrella organization Group Mission Trips, has been "working with and helping communities across the United States and the world" since the early 1990s, according to the group's website at groupmissiontrips.com. "We work hard to bring meaningful service to the communities we serve. Since our beginning, thousands upon thousands of mission trip participants have racked up millions of volunteer hours serving people in need."

Group Mission Trips offers volunteer opportunities for home repair, community service and international service.

Over the past decade, the organization has provided approximately 50 mission trips to SALS boasting around 18,000 participants, according to Mike Krantz, regional director.

In addition to these organizations, "SALS hosts every year numerous university and other faith-based student groups," David said. "The count would easily total several thousand over the past two decades."

Aside from leading to the FAHE award, SALS' housing projects are winners for the community in general.

"(SALS) is a good organization," Smith said in an interview with The Register-Herald earlier this year. "It does a lot for our community. It helps a lot of people who really need help."

"In total, the number of people who have come to help exceeds 20,000," David said. "Without question, those who have come have made a major economic contribution to this area. They have spent considerable money while here and SALS has spent an enormous amount purchasing building materials.

"Perhaps most importantly, they have significantly improved the housing stock in this area and made a vast contribution to assisting people to have safer housing, healthier nutrition and accented education. The total value of this contribution to the lives of many cannot be measured but is enormous," David concluded.

For more on SALS, visit sals.info.

Kincaid Office News

by Ruth Lanham

Hello, this is Ruth at the SALS office in Kincaid. It is with much sadness that I write an article about the loss of my son. It has been so devastating for our family but we must press onward. Thanks to everybody for being there for me and my family. The kind words and gestures meant so much. He was our youngest child and he lived at home with Tex and I for 36 years. So it gets really lonesome sometimes because it seems so quiet that he is not running up and down the stairs. He called every day at 3:00 p.m. before he went to work. This is just to tell everyone hold your children close and tell them you love them every day. Cherish every moment with them.

Ok, now it is time for news about the office. We have been cranking out proposals to different funders. It seems like every day we try and work on a proposal. There is a lot of work that goes into these proposals for John and myself. We are getting ready to submit a couple more within the next couple of weeks. YouthBuild is gliding along working on several houses in the area. We still have positions available for youth ages 16-24 who are high school drop outs. They can earn a stipend and receive construction skills along with GED education.

We get calls every day about a family member that needs a handicap ramp or has a roof that is leaking. To them it is a major problem. To us it is a regret that we can't help everybody. We have had a couple of families who had no heat in their house.

It has again been a very busy season trying to keep up with everything. The food bank is going very well with several new families coming for food. If you would like to donate to the food pantry we would welcome all donations or contributions. If you have a very successful garden with an abundance of fresh vegetables, we would be happy to give some to these families.

We are still in desperate need of some good vehicles so that we can replace some of the very hold ones with high mileage. My car has a nickname which is "Hunk of Junk". We could use a couple of work trucks. We have tax credits available.

We also need some washers, dryers, stoves, and refrigerators. Some families need one when theirs quits and they have no money for repairs or to replace them. If you would like to donate to SALS you can call our office at 304-250-7627 or drop it by our office on Route 61.

Thank you in advance for your kindness to your community. God will bless you richly for your kindness to others.

Volunteers at Regina, continued from page two

We have a cook out for the local community and tenants on a monthly basis when weather is good. Everyone is looking forward to this fall. That's when we have our harvest fest we all get together to build a bonfire, play games and have a chili cook-off with a live band. This was something that was not heard of throughout Regina's history. What was formerly heard of were drugs, homeless people, thievery, shootings, and assaults. It was a bad place to live.

Today, with the help of Global Volunteers we have become one big family and accepted in an area that detested Regina Apartments at one time. Without the help of our Global Volunteers we could have never done this turnaround!

There is still more that we need help with and we look forward to future Global Volunteer visits. From all of us to all of you, keep on coming. Our door is always open and food is always on the table if we have it. Thank you all so much for fixing up our homes and a place that is safe now. Even though sometimes we don't express and show the love we have for Global Volunteers please know that you all have helped so many and there are so many more that need help!

You're always welcome here at Regina. With our sincere thanks, Brenda and the Tennant's of Regina Apartments in Gauley Bridge, West Virginia.

Wait til Next Year, continued from page one

In the months and years ahead there is likely to be a greater need for organizations like SALS to help people and communities put the pieces back together after a horrific event. Our staff and volunteers may not be recognized among federal and state response teams, but we stand ready to pitch in and work where ever possible in these forgotten communities.



SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN LABOR SCHOOL

P.O. BOX 127 Kincaid, WV 25119
 Phone /Fax: (304)250-7627 or (304)465-9732
SALS Community Center, Beards Fork
 Phone: (304)779-2280/ Fax: (304)779-2772
Historic Oak Hill School
 Phone/Fax: (304)465-4246
Regina Three Rivers Apartments
 Phone: (304) 640-5515
www.ConstructingChangeAndBridgingGaps.com
 E-mail: sals@citynet.net/ Website: www.sals.info

BOARD AND STAFF (*Advisory)

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Dear Friend of SALS "CONSTRUCTING CHANGE FROM THE GROUND UP"

As the season begins to change the Southern Appalachian Labor School (SALS) is taking time to view our challenges. Our grants have dried up and the demands for what we do have increased.

According to the West Virginia Department of Education, there are over 10,000 children attending school in West Virginia who are homeless. In the area we serve within the Southern West Virginia coal fields, there are 1,000. Fayette County, which is our primary base, is now a "Distressed County" as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Far too many families are in urgent need of decent, affordable housing during the freezing months. When a home, if they have one, is covered in mold, has no working heat or electricity, or has holes in its foundation that let in rodents and other dangerous animals, families often spend sleepless nights and frustrating days trying to figure out a way to escape these harmful living conditions. When SALS partners with families, they gain so much more than a roof over their heads. Children who suffer from frequent respiratory infections grow up healthier in a house free from mold. A SALS home gives children a safe, quiet place to study so they can do well in school. And families benefit from our food pantries and after school/summer school programs that provide enhanced educational services and nutritious meals.

But we cannot do this without your help. Help can come to us in different packages. We need everything, including land, buildings, vehicles, building supplies, supplies for the Community Center, and especially cash. Anything contributes something to reducing our cost of doing what we are doing. If you donate a value of at least \$500 and pay taxes in West Virginia, you can take advantage of the state tax credits allocated to SALS. Donors receive both a state tax credit and a possible federal charitable contribution, thereby helping both us and you at the same time. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Hopefully, you realize that what we are doing is meaningful, important, empowering, and deserving of your generous support. We rely on you and appreciate your help. Be well, do good things, and keep in touch!

Best Wishes


 John David, Director

Members of the Board are involved with the United Mine Workers of America, Head Start, West Virginia Rainbow Coalition, Black Lung and Disabled Workers Association, West Virginians for Affordable Health Care, West Virginia State Employees, College, University and Labor Education Association, Appalachian Community Partners, New River Safe Housing, Fayette Housing, Community Union Project, West Virginia Environmental Council, Citizens Action Group, SHARE, National Black Lung Association, APPALSHOP, New Page Housing, Fayette Family Resource Network, and Numerous Community Groups.

Southern Appalachian Labor School - Who We Are

www.SALS.info

www.ConstructingChangeAndBridgingGaps.com

**Community Center in Beards Fork
Historic Oak Hill School
Kincaid Central Office voice or fax
Regina Three Rivers Apartments**

**304-779-2772/ph/fax or 779-2280
304-465-4246 phone/fax
304-250-7627 or 304-250-7627
304-640-5515 or 304-465-9732**

**John David, Director - 304-250-7627
Vickie Smith, Const. : 304-640-3792, fax 469-9721
Ruth Lanham, Admin. Assistant - 304-250-7627**

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Linda Dillard	Custodian
Vickie Mullins	Community Center
Terry Black	YouthBuild Trainer

'Accent Education' After School Program

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WV Division of Juvenile Services

Youth Report Center/SALS Historic Oak Hill School

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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, or SALS license plate

E-mail _____
Name _____
Address _____
City/St/zip _____
Telephone _____

Give on the WEB at: 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.



JOIN AMERICORPS



BEST DECISION EVER. MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN WEST VIRGINIA, FIND A CAREER, GET \$\$\$.

AMERICORPS ON THE FRONTLINE

Help improve high school graduation rates—be a mentor! AmeriCorps on the Frontline members work with students to improve attendance, behavior, and course performance in grades 3-12. Members serve in Berekeley, Cabell, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Morgan, Pleasants, Randolph, Ritchie, Wayne, and Wood counties. Visit educationalalliance.org or (304) 342-7849.



PRESERVING WEST VIRGINIA'S HISTORIC PLACES



GROWING LOCAL FOOD IN WHEELING

APPALACHIAN FOREST HERITAGE AREA (AFHA)

In the scenic eastern mountains of West Virginia, AFHA AmeriCorps members improve ecosystems, provide outreach, and environmental education. AmeriCorps members provide hands-on historic preservation and improve heritage museums. Visit appalachianforest.us or call (304) 636-6182.

APPALACHIA HEALTHCORPS

Play a hands-on role in creating a healthy future in West Virginia! AmeriCorps members promote healthy choices through education, weight loss, nutrition, and physical activity. Change lives by teaching chronic disease self-management through healthy lifestyle choices. Members serve throughout the state. Call (740) 350-9943 for more information.

ENERGY EXPRESS

Need a summer gig? Love kids? Energy Express AmeriCorps members promote successful reading skills for more than 3,000 children throughout state during the summer. Children receive two nutritious meals each day, and with AmeriCorps members serving as mentors, they participate in reading, writing, recreation and drama activities. Positions available throughout the state. Visit energyexpress.ext.wvu.edu or call (304) 293-3855.

GROW OHIO VALLEY

Follow the path food travels from farm to fork! Located in Wheeling, Grow Ohio Valley AmeriCorps members build a thriving community through local food. Rotate through all of Grow Ohio Valley's programs, including urban farming, community education, and food security. Visit growov.org or call (304) 233-4789.

AMERICORPS BENEFITS

- Monthly living stipend
- Education Award for college or student loans
- Health insurance
- Student loan forbearance
- Career development
- Knowing you made West Virginia a better place

HIGH ROCKS

High Rocks AmeriCorps members address youth empowerment, housing, local food, volunteerism, and more. Their mission is to educate, empower, and inspire young people to build a strong and sustainable West Virginia. Visit highrocks.org, or call (304) 653-4891.

LIFEBRIDGE

Make a difference in your community. LifeBridge AmeriCorps members, serving in 21 counties, give a hand up to families across the Mountain State through financial education, Veterans assistance, and high school credit recovery. Visit lifebridgewv.org, or call (304) 340-3593.

PRESERVATION WV

Preservation WV AmeriCorps members help main streets thrive, help communities capture their local history, and preserve beloved West Virginia landmarks. Members' service emphasizes community development and revitalization through projects focused on historic preservation, volunteer management, and heritage tourism development. Visit pawv.org or call (304) 345-6005.



Volunteer West Virginia



The State's Commission for National and Community Service

MORE ON BACK!

STEP BY STEP STRENGTHS CORPS

Help build a new future in the Southern coal fields. Serving Boone, Logan, Lincoln, Kanawha, and Roane counties, Step by Step Strength Corps helps at-risk students build resiliency to graduate from high school with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to successfully transition to a career, college, or technical school. Visit www.stepbystepwv.org or call (304) 414-4452.

STEP BY STEP -VISTA

Decrease substance abuse rates at the local level, increase access to healthy foods for families in recovery with young children, assist at-risk students in identifying and building on existing strengths in order to build their resiliency, and assist parents in becoming better advocates for their children's academic needs. Positions available statewide. Visit stepbystepwv.org or call (304) 414-4452.

WEST VIRGINIA'S PROMISE -VISTA

Support West Virginia's Five Promises to Children and Youth. Work with community partners to ensure children have the conditions they need to achieve adult success: the help and guidance of caring adult relationships, healthy childhoods, safe surroundings, effective education and opportunities to serve others. Visit fivepromises.wv.gov, or call (304) 661-1460.

WV STRONG -VISTA

WV Strong AmeriCorps VISTAs help military families get the support they need: housing services, noncriminal legal assistance, hospice care employment, transportation, and military family services. Additionally, VISTAs serve with the disaster services program to help engage community volunteers in disaster recovery after the historic 2016 floods. For more information call (304) 558-0111.

WVU COLLABORATIVE DIRECT AMERICORPS

Help your fellow WVU classmates graduate college! AmeriCorps members serve as Peer First Year Transition Leaders or Innovative Service Champions for fellow college students who are at risk for dropping out of school. In exchange, AmeriCorps members receive professional development and an Education Award to pay for school or repay student loans. Visit <https://service.wvu.edu/> or call (304) 293-8761.

SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN LABOR SCHOOL -VISTA

Serve in beautiful Fayette County, housing included! Members will assist with activities pertaining to a demonstration farm, financial independence, housing repair volunteer recruitment, and affordable housing for Veterans. Visit sals.info or call (304) 250-7627.

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY - VISTA COLLABORATIVE -VISTA

Be a part of an exciting VISTA project at WVU! Members serve in a variety of programs which include Veterans' Affairs, Adventure WV, Addiction Studies, Collegiate Recovery, the Student Food Pantry, Fostering Fairmont, ASPIRE/Peace Corps Prep, Sociological Database Design, the Community Leadership Academy, and more. Visit service.wvu.edu or call (304) 293-8348.

WV COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT HUB -VISTA

Build thriving communities. Connect communities with the resources to grow in economic, civic and social health. VISTA members perform activities such as research grants to aid community projects, and recruit volunteers and VISTA members, and develop presentations to gain support and understanding of the Hub's mission. Visit wvhub.org or call (304) 533-1077

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS IN WEST VIRGINIA -VISTA

Create healthy futures in West Virginia communities! Help build infrastructure to deliver evidence based preventive programs, help develop a Community Health Worker system that connects people to much needed health care, and help communities take actions that make healthy choices easier. For more information, call (740) 350-9943.

STEM WORKS -VISTA

Help prepare students for careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Members help high schools build Makerspaces and use technology to boost student achievement. Visit educationalliance.org or call (304) 342-7849.

NATIONAL COAL HERITAGE AREA AUTHORITY -VISTA

Make Southern West Virginia shine. Promote economic development through community revitalization and community based development. VISTAs serve in local small non-profits that use community volunteers to provide basic health education, literacy, housing, child mentoring, and other basic services. Visit coalheritage.org or call (304) 465-3720.

UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL WV -VISTA

Empower children and adults to live healthier lives and link them with the educational tools to bring themselves out of poverty. VISTAs serve in schools & after school programs, adult basic education sites, FRNs & Starting Points. Members focus on educational opportunities, and the importance of health, fitness and nutrition for adults and children. Visit unitedwaycww.org or call (304) 340-3620.

SENIOR CORPS

Are you 55 years or older? Senior Corps may be the perfect fit for you!

Each year more than 2,700 West Virginia seniors met critical community needs while contributing to longer, healthier lives through one of three Senior Corps programs: RSVP, Senior Companions, and Foster Grandparents.

FOSTER GRANDPARENTS

Foster Grandparents serve as one-on-one as tutors, mentors, and friends to young people with exceptional needs.



To learn more about Senior Corps call (304) 347-5246.

SENIOR COMPANIONS

Senior Companions provide assistance and friendship to older adults who have difficulty with daily living tasks, such as shopping or paying bills. They help these adults remain independent in their homes instead of having to move to more costly institutional care.

RSVP

RSVP is one of the largest volunteer networks in the nation for people 55 and over. You can use the skills and talents you've learned over the years, or develop new ones while serving in a variety of volunteer activities within your community.

Charleston Gazette-Mail

A PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING NEWSPAPER

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2019

PARTLY

W.Va. stands to hurt from looming recession

FEW ECONOMISTS disagree that the nation faces a recession. While some economic indicators appear still rosy, business investment continues to fall. This indicator is key in measuring business confidence that investments will pay off with economic growth as contrasted to nervousness and coasting with the status quo.

Panic has permeated inner circles, as policy makers and legislators scramble for yet another financial

prescription. Increasing the national debt, which provided the recent expansion, is a prescription that has been exhausted. For example, the trade war with China will certainly make it less likely that China, which owns a lion's share of our national debt, will



John David

continue to renew or purchase U.S. debt. Furthermore, even if purchasers of U.S. debt can be found, it will be at a higher cost.

The higher cost of interest payments in the federal budget will reduce oxygen in the room for implementing reforms promised by presidential candidates. Thus, those expecting major public improvements for health care, clean energy and similar programs will discover difficulty. The president is claiming that continued prosperity is just around the corner, which eerily echoes former President Herbert Hoover's false prophesy 80 years ago as the nation plunged into the Great Depression.

A second administration prescription is using tariffs to encourage the production of more goods at home. This approach has dubious promise. Recent interviews and reports on National Public Radio reveal that corporate executives favor moving produc-

tion to other low-wage countries, like Viet Nam and Thailand or, in fact not moving at all. Recent economic projections indicate that existing tariffs will cost a typical family around \$450 annually and consumers will likely have to absorb it.

A third administration prescription is allowing corporate mergers and increased concentration with the hope that increased size creates efficiencies that are passed down in lower costs. However, as recently reported in the Wall Street Journal, Europe has opted for more competition, not less, to benefit consumers. For example, French consumers in 2014 paid 27 percent less for telecommunications services than in the U.S. due to increased competition. Overall, as noted by Thomas Philippon, a New York University economist in a new book published by Harvard University Press, "declining competition has raised profit margins and prices while reducing workers' share of national income in the U.S."

Spin doctors are now busy assigning blame for the mess, and the convenient targets are always those who are disenfranchised and powerless, namely low-income families. In an analogy similar to combating drugs, the issue on the table is whether the culprit is the recipient (user) or the provider (pusher/seller).

In a revealing recent Associated Press report, it was noted that "after a full decade of uninterrupted economic growth, the richest Americans now hold a greater share of the nation's wealth than they did before the Great Recession began in 2007. And income growth has been sluggish by historical standards, leaving many Americans feeling stuck in place. Fewer middle-class Americans own homes.

Fewer are invested in the stock market. And home prices have risen far more in wealthier metro areas on the coasts than in more modestly

priced cities and rural areas. The result is that affluent homeowners now sit on vast sums of home equity and capital gains, while tens of millions of ordinary households have been left mainly on the sidelines."

This leads into another prescription called the "wealth tax" that would tax privileged families with perpetual fortunes over \$50 million. This would be an effort to change the culture in our society, which currently caters to those with excessive wealth who believe what they have is never enough.

Without question, the impact is huge and will have long-term repercussions. Since West Virginia's economy typically rides the surf on the last wave, the economic impact has been temporarily camouflaged by the energy boom. However, those at the bottom of the boat are already hurting due to higher prices for utilities, wiped out retirement savings and lack of employment in key industries like coal. The fact that today there are over 10,000 children attending public schools in West Virginia who are homeless is a tragedy. The downward spiral will, in turn, cause further economic decline for many as the state spins further into the economic apartheid phenomenon of concurrent but separate economic systems.

All of the prescriptions cost money. The fairness question is whether people at the bottom should have the equal opportunity to be subsidized or bailed out as those who profited to get to the top. The economic question is how to pay for any prescription, which brings clearly into focus whether we can rediscover the wisdom in American history when Franklin D. Roosevelt declared in his second inaugural speech that "government by organized money is just as dangerous as a government by organized mob."

John David is a Gazette-Mail contributing columnist

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