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SNAPSHOT



A MONTHLY RECAP OF LOCAL CHURCH NEWS & VIEWS

Biblically Astute and Socially Conscious: Cliftondale UMC Grows

Second in a series of stories from growing congregations around the North Georgia Conference.



In 2015, there were about 25 people in the pews on Sunday morning. Today, between 250-300 worshipers attend on an average Sunday at Cliftondale UMC and church pastor, Rev. Kevin Murriel, has witnessed around 100 professions of faith in just two years.

The congregation has devoted its time to reaching out across several generations throughout the College Park area. As a result, they have seen tremendous growth in, not only worship attendance, but also small groups attendance, membership, and social justice involvement.

"I attribute all of our growth to the Holy Spirit," Murriel says, "it's contagious."

The congregation has used several ministry platforms to spread the work of the Holy Spirit around the community.

Several Cliftondale small groups step outside the box of normal bible study protocol. The senior small group, "Mind, Body and Soul," kicks off with line dancing before diving into discussion. The young adult small group meets on the Morehouse College campus, and can be watched live online. Through the internet and college connections, they've formed a following that extends across the Atlanta area. In 2017, Murriel hopes to start a Christian Singles group for those who are over 30. It would be open to those who have been divorced, widowed, or simply don't have a partner.

"Small groups have been essential to Cliftondale," the pastor says, "If a church wants to grow, then they should put time into developing small groups."

Like many churches, Cliftondale UMC also strives "to get Sunday morning right." Murriel says that requires a personal touch. Congregants can volunteer as Ministry Ambassadors, a job that consists of calling new visitors and new members to simply thank them.

The church also extended its community reach through its 8:30 pm time slot on the Atlanta Interfaith Broadcasters Network (AIB) on Sunday evenings. Atlantans can tune in to this channel to watch a live

sermon from home.

Every year, Cliftondale tries to focus on a theme. In 2016, it was spiritual maturity. This year, the congregation is focusing on breakthroughs and resetting priorities. Murriel leads themed discussions like one would lead a theology course, allowing participants to dig a little deeper than on Sunday mornings. Those who attend most of the discussions even receive a certificate of completion. It's gained a lot of attention in the area and in the congregation.

"Our main focus is to remain biblically astute and socially conscious," Murriel says.

He wants the congregation to not only know the bible, but also know how to apply it to the world outside the church property. With these attributes in mind, Cliftondale UMC works to intertwine its members with social justice. They are working to address issues such as domestic violence, food insecurity, and racism, and are remaining aware of local politics.

The church building has housed political forums on behalf of the City of South Fulton. Within the walls, politicians have declared their candidacy, and individuals across the city have voiced their goals and concerns.

"We have to be better at partnering in ministry," Murriel explains. It's these kinds of partnerships that form trust between the community and the church.

By being socially conscious, Cliftondale UMC has enabled itself to become a pillar of support for College Park, even for those who have not attended a church service.

"Today, churches and denominations have to think of church in a different way," he continues. "Churches willing to embrace new ideas in the same spirit will thrive."

Murriel agrees with the words sometimes attributed to John Wesley: "Light yourself on fire with passion and people will come from miles to watch you burn."



LaGrange College Opens \$21 Million Sciences Project



Pouncer watches as Dr. Arthur Sikora, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, prepares a special 'ribbon cutting' for the opening of the Ida Callaway Hudson Lab Sciences Building at LaGrange College. A chemical reaction produced flames that burned through the ceremonial ribbon.

LaGrange College hosted a ribbon cutting and open house at the new \$21 million Ida Callaway Hudson Lab Sciences Building and completely renovated Callaway Science Building on Friday.

A state-of-the-art, 40,000-square-foot facility, Hudson Lab Sciences Building houses laboratories for instruction in

anatomy/physiology, biology, chemistry, ecology, cell and molecular biology, microbiology and organic chemistry and designated space for undergraduate research.

The building includes microscopes that allow students to transfer images to their smartphones or tablets, seminar rooms with oversized televisions and huge dry-erase panels, prep rooms between each lab to allow professors to assemble materials before each class, glass panels in common areas for use as dry-erase boards, a nuclear magnetic resonance machine and an atomic absorption spectrophotometer.

The facility incorporates "soft" learning spaces and community areas for students to gather, compare notes, study or socialize. The spaces also allow students to interact with their professors outside the classroom.

The new laboratories will provide graduates pursuing careers in research, medicine, allied health fields or sustainability, firsthand experience with best-practice instructional methods and current technological innovations.

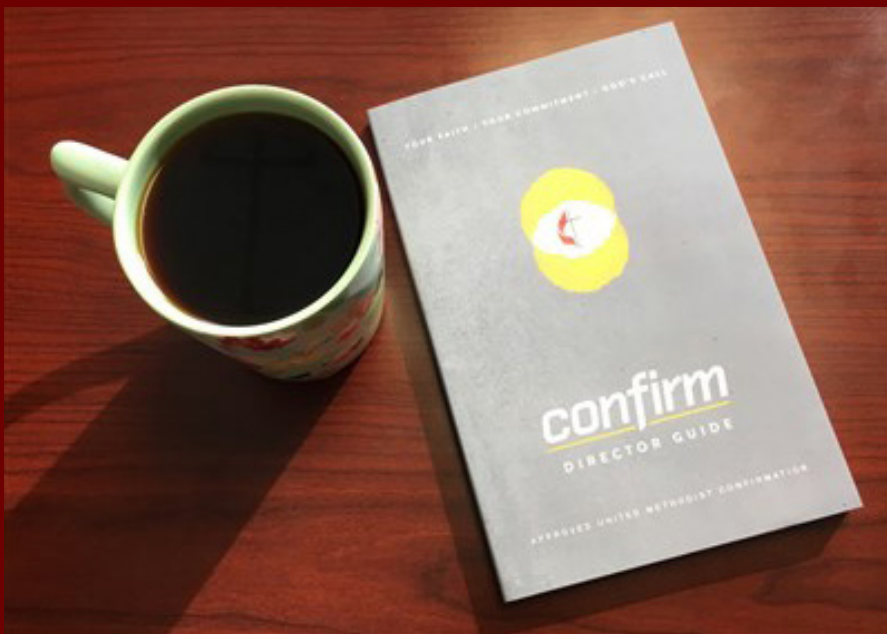
In addition to the new facility, Callaway Science Building has undergone a total overhaul. Opened in 1972, the facility creates a modern classroom learning environment for the college's students. The facility will continue to serve as classroom space for all of the sciences and as home for computational mathematics and physics.

The "like new" building features space designed especially for STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) instruction, including a high-performance computer to support a range of scientific research, a new and enlarged physics lab, spacious math classrooms surrounded by white boards, seminar and group-study areas and full accessibility to those with disabilities.

The new space also provides a significant boost to the college's relatively new computational mathematics major.

Working with their chemistry, biology and physics colleagues—and the new high-performance computer—faculty and students will be able to pursue multiple undergraduate research projects in experimenting with and mathematically modeling a wide array of interdisciplinary inquiry, mirroring the latest in scientific research trends.

God At Work: Resources for Confirmation



One of the things that I enjoy most about the very first confirmation class every year is the encounter with the young person who clearly does not want to be there. He or she normally sits in the back of the room with his or her eyes fixed upon whatever is going on outside of the nearest door or window and reluctantly provides answers that are generally short, or perhaps even inaudible.

As off-putting as this student's actions can be, he or she is one of my favorite "types" of student to encounter because I know that the initial resistance, while hard fought, will wane as he or she begins to open up over the course of the confirmation experience. Perhaps you have encountered this type of student too. Such an experience with a reluctant student should remind us of the limitations of our role as teachers in relationship to the limitless ability of God's mysterious work through the Holy Spirit. This type of experience should also underscore the importance of creating a confirmation experience where God can work.

— Rev. Dr. Tonya Lawrence, "Confirm: Director Guide"

We asked Rev. Dr. Tonya Lawrence, author of the Director's Guide for Cokesbury's new series, Confirm, to share resources she recommends to confirmation leaders. First-time and long-time leaders will benefit from these tools.

- She suggests the following books and videos:
- Models of Confirmation and Baptismal Affirmation by Robert L. Browning and Roy A. Reed. Published by Religious Education Press, Birmingham, 1995.
- The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism by Dom Gregory Dix. Published by Oxford: Dacre Press, Westminster, 1953.
- Confirm Student Bible
- Confirm curriculum, including the parent guide, at www.cokesbury.com/confirm
- [Overview of Confirm](#) (Video)
- [Church Knows Confirmation Part 1](#)
- [Chuck Knows Confirmation Part 2](#)

Central United Methodist Church Atlanta to Celebrate 150th Anniversary

One of Atlanta's historic churches, Central United Methodist Church, is set to celebrate 150 years of ministry this February.

The sesquicentennial celebration will be held under the theme, "Celebrating Our Heritage While Embracing our Future". and will take place on Sunday, February 26 with a grand worship service and a sermon to be delivered by guest preacher, Bishop Woodie W. White. This will be followed by heritage feast at the Dotson/Olgetree Fellowship Hall.

Founded in 1866, Central UMC boasts a rich legacy of religious, moral, civic and educational leadership. It has played a crucial role in engendering some of the most aggressive and progressive movements of racial equality in Atlanta.

"Historical churches have a rich past, and if revisited frequently enough and from the right perspective, this history can be inspirational and motivational for the pastor and congregation to take the ministry to the next level," said Rev. Yvette D. Massey, senior pastor and first female pastor of Central.

Over the years, the intergenerational church has made a dynamic impact on the community with the establishment of many programs including:

- Low income housing for the community
- Free summer camp for the church and community children
- Youth Enrichment Program (YEP) for low income or at risk teenagers
- Food ministry

And if that was not enough, the church also established a successful intergenerational drama department that regularly performs successful stage plays for the church and community. It also has a strong music department which has provided its members opportunities to perform with many professional music artists such as Patti Labelle, Richard Smallwood, Gladys Knight, The Pointer Sisters, Sandi Patti and many more.

They church founded the Atlanta Gospel Christmas Explosion, an annual event which sees the church choir collaborating with Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. -- the first collaboration of its kind completed in the country.

Central United Methodist Church provides a strong bible-based teaching and is committed to the spiritual growth of its members. Consequently, the church offers courses that are open to the community and other denominations.

When members and visitors congregate on February 26 at 501 Mitchell Street SW, it will not only be a celebration of the church's longevity but also the historical milestones and the immense impact they have made and continue to make on the Atlanta community at large. For more information, visit: <http://centralumcatl.org>.

Wesley Chapel UMC McDonough Celebrates 150th Anniversary



Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church in McDonough will host several events during the church's anniversary month to celebrate its milestone 150th Church Anniversary.

The community is invited to drop-in during our 'Community Open House' anytime between 11am-2pm on Saturday, February 11. Featuring a "Trip Down Memory Lane," a 150-year timeline that traces the church's heritage along with major local, national and world events throughout the years will be displayed in the Thomas Fellowship Hall. Numerous displays throughout the church, including a Pastor Pictorial Gallery, showcase Wesley Chapel's rich history and spiritual legacy in the McDonough community.

On Saturday, February 18, at 6 pm the church will host a Free Gospel Concert. Grammy nominated gospel singer Anita Wilson (Jesus Will, Keep Doing What You're Doing, Time After Time, All About You, etc.) and other musical guests will perform. All are invited to come join in song and celebration.

Bishop Jonathan Holston will be the guest pastor for the 150th Church Anniversary worship celebration on Sunday, February 26, at 9:45 am (one combined service. The theme is "Daring to live Our Divine Destiny".

Wesley Chapel was organized in 1867. During the 1880's, it was a one-room building. The Macon Street church building, the current McDonough Municipal Court, was designed and erected in 1922. Five beautiful stained glass windows were added in 1924 and later moved to the new church at 397 Racetrack Road along with the Wesley bell.

In 1999, Wesley Chapel was blessed to purchase 10 acres of land for the construction of a new church facility and held its first worship service on the 136th anniversary.

Today Rev. William Bert Neal, III serves as senior pastor. Rev. Neal was appointed June 23, 2013 and under his spiritual guidance and leadership has strengthened Wesley Chapel's Outreach Ministries and Christian Education.

Wesley serves the McDonough community through its monthly H3 (Help, Heal, and Hope) hot meal mission outreach in McDonough and the international community through Stop Hunger Now by packaging thousands of meals for distribution throughout the world. The United Methodist Men are active with the young men of the church and through a new prison ministry reuniting children with incarcerated parents. The church participates annually with the Angel Tree program providing Christmas gifts to under privileged youth. There are numerous active ministries for all ages, including a Youth Ministry and Choir, Young Adult Ministry, Jolly Seniors, Care & Visitations Ministry and Girl Scout Troops 13106 and 822. The newest ministry is Drive Thru Coffee & Prayer when Rev. Neal and members share coffee, pastries, prayers and a bible to passersby in the mornings.

For more information, please contact the church office or visit the church website, <http://wesleymcd.org>.

Wesley Woods to Honor 'Heroes, Saints & Legends' in March



Chancellor Hank M. Huckaby, Community Leaders Ann Q. Curry, Bishop John H. Adams and Dr. Dolly Desselle Adams will be Honored at the Foundation of Wesley Woods Gala March 30

Prominent Georgians who all share a commitment to helping older adults live independently longer, with a higher quality of life, will be honored at the next Heroes, Saints & Legends gala presented by the Foundation of Wesley Woods.

University System of Georgia Chancellor Hank M. Huckaby, Ann Q. Curry of Coxe Curry & Associates and Bishop John H. Adams and Dr. Dolly Desselle Adams will be honored at the event that celebrates Georgians who have made significant ongoing contributions to the community through their dedication to leadership, service and philanthropy.

The Heroes, Saints & Legends event will be held on Thursday, March 30, at 6 p.m. at the St. Regis Atlanta. Funds raised will benefit Wesley Woods Senior Living's independent living communities, which serve more than 1,800 older adults annually, as well as specially designated Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease research and education programs at Emory University.

"Heroes, Saints & Legends gives us all the opportunity to shine a spotlight on the tremendous work these wonderful people have done to improve the lives of so many others," said Tracy Crump, president & CEO of the Foundation of Wesley Woods. "We look forward to having the public join us in honoring these individuals who help make possible the life-changing work of Wesley Woods."

This year's Heroes, Saints & Legends honorees include:

Hank M. Huckaby, Retired Chancellor of the University System of Georgia

Honored for his commitment to higher education, state and local civic leadership and service to the North Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church.

In May of 2011, the Board of Regents selected Hank M. Huckaby as the University System's 12th chancellor. He currently oversees 29 public colleges and universities with a \$8.1 billion annual budget and more than 47,000 faculty and staff fulfilling the teaching, research and public service mission to 318,164 students.

Huckaby is active in The United Methodist Church and has held numerous positions at both the conference and national levels. A graduate of the Methodist-affiliated Young Harris College, he maintains ties to the school and serves as a trustee. Huckaby and his wife, Amy, are members of Athens First United Methodist Church.

The Right Reverend John H. Adams, retired senior bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and Dr. Dolly Desselle Adams, retired educator and civic leader

Honored for their commitment to civil rights, social justice and raising awareness in the African-American community around cognitive disorders affecting seniors.

John H. Adams was elected and consecrated the 87th Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1972. He retired from active service at the 2004 General Conference after 54 years in ministry, with 22 years as a pastor and 32 years as a bishop, with 16 of those 32 years as senior bishop.

Long recognized as a creative coalition builder, Bishop Adams is founder of the Congress of National Black Churches (CNBC), founder of the Richard Allen Service and Development Agency (SADA), founder and chair of the Institute of Church Administration and Management (ICAM) in Atlanta, Georgia, the Educational Growth Organization (EGO) in Los Angeles, California, the Central Area Motivation Program in Seattle and chair of the Central Area Civil Rights Committee of Seattle, Washington.

In Georgia, Bishop Adams founded the Registry for Remembrance. The Registry is a special community and academic partnership to educate and recruit African Americans for long term research participation at the Emory Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC).

Dr. Dolly Desselle Adams served in a variety of posts from preschool teacher to professor at the University of Michigan, Wilberforce University, Albany State College, Paul Quinn College, Howard University School of Law to the Interdenominational Theological Center. Her role as Episcopal Supervisor of the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) and the Ministers' Wives of the Tenth, Second, Sixth, Seventh and Eleventh Episcopal Districts covered a span of 32 years. Dr. Adams led the WMS, YPD and Ministers' Spouses into active participation in civic, religious, economic, political and social endeavors.

Ann Q. Curry, chair and chief client strategist, Coxe Curry & Associates

Honored for her commitment to helping nonprofit organizations successfully realize their mission and drive community impact.

For more than 40 years, Ann Curry has played a leading role in development efforts aiding non-profits in Georgia. Campaigns Curry leads or has led for Coxe Curry & Associates include the \$325 million Greater Grady campaign for the Grady Health Foundation, Spelman College's \$150 million campaign, The Trust for Public Land's \$150 million Chattahoochee land protection effort and the Piedmont Park Conservancy's \$41.2 million expansion of the Park. She currently consults with the Atlanta BeltLine Partnership, the Atlanta Botanical Garden, Berry College and the Westside Future Fund.

Past Heroes, Saints & Legends honorees include former First Lady Rosalynn S. Carter, former Atlanta Mayors Andrew Young, Sam Massell and Shirley Franklin, business and civic leaders Truett Cathy, Jesse Hill, Ingrid Saunders Jones and Paul S. Amos, Lonnie Ali, baseball legend Hank Aaron, and numerous others.

Headquartered in Atlanta, Wesley Woods offers housing and supportive services for older adults throughout North Georgia. More than 1,800 older adults, 75 percent of whom need financial assistance and one-third of which live below the poverty line, are served annually in Wesley Woods residential communities, primarily in independent living settings.

Stepping Out On Faith: Carrollton Church, Wesley Foundation Look to the Future



By Sybil Davidson

An exciting, new thing is happening in Carrollton, Georgia.

This weekend, the congregation of St. Andrew UMC learned about its next pastoral appointment — one bit of information on a journey they are taking on faith.

In June, St. Andrew will be a part of a Vital Merger between the church and the now-closed Wesley Foundation of the University of West Georgia. The church and the campus ministry will work together to launch a new church.

"What's really unique is that this might be the first of its kind," explained Rev. Dr. David Naglee, Rome-Carrollton District Superintendent.

An Opportunity

In late 2016, Naglee, along with Director of Congregational Development Rev. Dr. Phil Schroeder and Director of Georgia's UMCommission on Higher Education Rev. Michael McCord, met with the church to propose the idea of this unusual merger.

A Vital Merger is a best-practice in church development, where everyone involved puts mission first and starts a brand new ministry rather than blending one group into another existing group.

The church, as they know it now, would close and be re-established as a new ministry with the campus ministry at the university.

Naglee made it clear to the church that they could receive a preacher in June in the typical process, and go on with ministry just as they have in the past, or they could try something totally different. They didn't have to make a quick decision, but could think and pray on the idea and let him know.

The Administrative Council met again in January.

St. Andrew's Administrative Council chair, Robin Johnson, has been a member of the church for more than 15 years, and her grandmother was a member when Robin was a child. Her connection goes back to summers in VBS.

She explained that the church is small and tight-knit. It's well run, and even when the congregation's pastor had to take extended medical leave last year, everything went along as usual.

Though she deeply loves the history of the church, she wants to see the congregation grow and thrive.

"The majority of the church feels that way," she explained. "We have prayed about it and prayed about it."

At the January Administrative Council meeting church leadership talked about the potential for the future, and also about their attachment to the building, to their traditions, even to their name.

"We didn't have any answers," she said.

When it came time for the council to make a decision to merge or not to merge, they took the vote anonymously

on paper so that anyone who had reservations could voice them without pressure.

Johnson and interim-pastor Rev. Chris Barbieri took the paper slips to the next room to count.

"My prayer that night was that we wouldn't be divided," she said.

They opened the slips one by one.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

Until every paper had been opened and the vote was unanimous.

"They said they wanted to be a viable presence in their community," said Naglee. "They were willing, even enthusiastic, to do something new."

Johnson said the decision wasn't so hard when they looked at the mission of the church.

"We want to do bigger and better things for the community and for the college," she said. "I can't wait to look back in five years and say, look how many more people we have reached in this community."

Of course, there's plenty of nervousness.

"We have had ups and downs as a congregation and they led us here," Johnson said. "To be involved at this level at this point in the church's history is beyond exciting."

She credits Rev. Barbieri for helping the church in a time of transition.

"I can't say enough about his leadership and how he's supported us," she said.

What's to Come

When St. Andrew was established some 50 years ago its mission and purpose was to reach the west Carrollton community and students of West Georgia, explained Naglee. The church has a long history of being supportive of the Wesley Foundation.

The announcement of the merger and the appointment of the new pastor, Rev. Sam Dawkins, is coming early in the North Georgia Conference appointment cycle because of the complexity of the merger. Some of the timeline will need to involve the new pastor, as will decisions as the new ministry develops a structure, a financial plan, and sets its course for the future.

In addition to St. Andrew's building, the Wesley Foundation also owns property, but a location hasn't been decided on for the new church to land.

"We will look for the best property for this ministry," McCord explained. "In this stage of assessing the needs, everything is on the table."

McCord and the UMCommission board are as enthusiastic as the congregation.

"This is an opportunity to create a ministry that serves college students within an intergenerational community of faith," he explained. "We know that there is power in intergenerational ministry and worship."

And he's confident St. Andrew UMC is the right church for this journey.

"This church is so creative and willing and open," he said.

The UMCommission has already begun collecting names of interested students, letting them know that something new will launch in 2017. They would like to introduce the new pastor to the students before they leave campus for the summer.

Dawkins, a provisional elder, was active in the University of Georgia Wesley when he was a student and continues to feel a call to campus ministry.

With support and enthusiasm from the Conference, the Rome-Carrollton District, the UMCommission, and the church, St Andrew members are now stepping out in faith.

"I am so proud of this congregation," said Naglee.

Aldersgate Homes Welcomes New Board Chair, Director Announces Retirement

The future holds adventures and challenges as Aldersgate Homes and Collinswood continues to serve persons with Developmental Disabilities!

Board President and one of the founders of Aldersgate Homes, Marian Wilder, will retire from the role after serving with distinction for many years.

Dr. Gue Hudson, retired Vice President and Dean at Agnes Scott College, has accepted the role and responsibilities of President of the Aldersgate and Collinswood Board of Directors. Gue has served the Board for a number of years and she comes prepared! Among Gue's many contributions at Agnes Scott, she brought the Best Buddies organization to campus. Best Buddies connects students with "Buddies" with special needs, providing opportunities for learning, fun and growth for both the students and the buddies. Gue is married to Bill Hudson and they have 3 sons and some precious grandchildren. Gue and Bill are parents to an adult son who is part of the disability community, so Gue brings

special knowledge and awareness to her position as Board President.

"We welcome Gue and look forward to fresh ideas, new perspectives and her leadership as we continue to serve persons with special needs," said Director Becky Bocian.

Bocian also looks forward to change as she recently announced that she will retire this year after more than 12 years as Executive Director.

"I have loved our residents, our friends in group homes and other special living arrangements, had wonderful times with members of the Board of Directors and volunteers, and truly found rest and recreation at Collinswood, the most beautiful spot on Lake Oconee!," wrote Bocian. "I appreciate so very much the churches, groups, Sunday School classes, and individuals who pray for this ministry and support it in so many ways. Your donations make this ministry possible and in giving, you touch countless lives and share and show God's love for all His children."

The search for a new director is underway.



Vital Signs Dashboard to be Simplified

Beginning March 3, your church's Vital Signs dashboard will be simplified to collect three vitally important data points:

- **Average Worship Attendance**
- **Professions of Faith**
- **Baptisms**

After feedback from North Georgia Conference clergy and church leaders, Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson and the cabinet have determined that consistently measuring these three indicators are a priority across our Conference.

Your church should continue to report these three statistics quarterly. Clergy or their designee will continue to receive the email weekly as a reminder to report data. However, the decision to similarly track other metrics, e.g., small group attendance, people served in mission, etc., will be at the discretion of the congregation and pastor. Pastors and churches are free to monitor their other vital signs in whatever way is most helpful to them.

Kids 'Can' Make a Difference: LOL Club Serves Community

The LOL Club, a children's outreach ministry of Elizabeth Lee UMC, constructed a flag out of 974 cans of soup, tuna fish, and PET milk donated by members of Elizabeth Lee.

This flag was assembled at Chickamauga Elementary School as a part of a community service project by the LOL Club. The food was distributed to families in the community and the Older American Center in Chickamauga which serves 140 seniors.

In addition to collecting canned goods, the children also bagged one-load scoops of laundry detergent in zip-lock bags. The laundry detergent was distributed to a domestic violence shelter and The Cottage. The Cottage is a residential facility serving children of Walker, Dade, Catoosa, and Chattooga Counties. It is affiliated with the Family Crisis Center of WDCC, Inc.





The North
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