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Jane Richardson, Disability Counselor
Amanda Romans, Housing Counselor and HCIS Coordinator

HOPE serves the counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth and Wythe and the City of Galax.



Spring 2008

Newsletter

Impact of Community Needs Assessment

By Andy Kegley, Executive Director

Fourteen years ago, HOPE convened a public forum to solicit ideas from the community about gaps in services in Wythe and Bland counties. From that exercise came the Brock Hughes Free Clinic, a self-esteem project with the school system and a housing resource manual.

Now, leveraging the momentum from the merger with Mountain Shelter, Inc., the new Board of Directors of HOPE is taking a bigger step—a Community Needs Assessment study facilitated by two Virginia Tech professors, Mary Ellen Verdu and Jim Bohland. Funded by the Wythe-Bland Community Foundation, this three-part project has collected approximately 375 direct client surveys from the Wythe and Bland Departments of Social Services; convened a lively focus group of some two dozen agency heads; and in early June will be hosting public forums for families and interested residents.

The resulting assessment report will guide the Board of HOPE in designing new programs to fill current and anticipated gaps in services, and will also be the foundation of HOPE's new strategic plan.

As a stakeholder in Wythe and Bland counties, should you have ideas about programs to enhance the quality of life in our communities, please contact me at (276) 228-6280, Ext. 211.

PUT YOUR ECONOMIC STIMULUS CHECK TO WORK WITH HOPE

With rising gas prices and the current housing crisis, the demand for HOPE's services continues to rise. Please consider making a charitable donation to HOPE right now and help make a difference in people's lives in your community.



Successful Grant Application to Fund HOPE's New Educational Initiative

HOPE was recently awarded a grant from the Wythe-Bland Community Foundation to fund an educational initiative designed to assist with the current housing crisis. Through the addition of a new financial education and certified housing counselor, HOPE plans to tackle the lack of financial literacy among the residents of Wythe and Bland counties.

National foreclosure statistics state that one out of every 200 homes will experience foreclosure and, tragically, the financial downfall of a household can have a devastating impact on the community. Many causes are cited for the crisis; however, the general lack of sophistication when it comes to financial terminology and products is a missing key to the proliferation of foreclosures. HOPE plans to initiate

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Other News and Upcoming Events

Visit www.wythehope.org or call (276) 228-6280 for more information

Volunteers Needed

The Volunteer Service Program is gearing up for its second season. Local and distant volunteer groups are still needed this summer to complete rehabilitation projects on homes of disadvantaged individuals and families in our communities.

Big Walker Century Ride

HOPE has gone international! Our house/umbrella logo is now gracing Team Morini's cycling jersey, to be unveiled during Fred Morini's June training camp for cyclists to be held here in Wythe and Bland counties. Team Morini will be riding in the 5th annual Big

Walker Century Ride on Saturday, July 5. Plan to join them and ride along at your own pace.

Register now for this charity bike ride at:

www.bigwalkercenturyride.com

Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

Homes For Sale

The Homeownership Program has several single family homes for sale in HOPE's Deerfield community with affordable financing programs available. HOPE also offers a full range of mortgage options for homebuyers on other properties of their choice.



www.fredmorini.com

Educational Initiative (continued from page 1)

education programs designed to foster financial stability for individuals, families and our communities.

The funded position will help HOPE establish and maintain a presence in Bland County to increase service provision in that community. In addition, HOPE plans to implement classroom-style programs like Money Smart, an adult training program created by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) to help

individuals build financial knowledge, develop financial confidence and use financial services effectively. A wealth and asset building program is also planned to advance households into an Individual Development Account (IDA), a matched savings account that enables low-income households to save toward the purchase of a major asset—most commonly buying their first home, paying for post-secondary education or starting a small

business. Finally, HOPE plans to expand the successful Realty Store program at area high schools to help students develop budgeting and other financial skills through an abbreviated and controlled “real world” experience.

HOPE's educational initiative will not only improve the financial literacy and overall well-being of individuals and families directly counseled, but also the economic vitality of our communities.



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Working Mission

HOPE is a human services organization facilitating initiatives and coordinating services aimed at improving the overall well-being of individuals and families by providing the tools necessary to increase self-sufficiency, promote healthy lifestyles, and enhance quality of life.