



REAL LIFE CENTER
Real help. Real hope.

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

A photograph showing the hands of several people of diverse backgrounds clasped together in a circle, symbolizing unity and support. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark grey rectangle containing white text.

THE MISSION OF THE REAL LIFE
CENTER IS TO WALK WITH THOSE
WHO ARE HURTING IN FAYETTE AND
COWETA COUNTIES BY PROVIDING A
SAFE ENVIRONMENT, SHARING THE
LOVE OF CHRIST, AND PROMOTING
LONG-TERM CHANGE.

A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Supporters:

Regardless of what a person might be facing next week, month, or year, we can be confident that they are not going to face it alone. That's where the Real Life Center enters into the lives of our clients.

Our mission at the Real Life Center is to walk alongside those individuals who are struggling in various areas of their lives. In 2023, we continued to see God's outstretched hand at work as we experienced increased client visits for many of our programs and services. We also experienced increased food distribution as economic conditions continue to weigh heavily on many in our community.

From time to time I hear people say they don't necessarily see God's hand at work in people's lives. To that I say, please stop by the Real Life Center and you will see, hear, and experience firsthand God at work in impossible situations that could only be resolved by His grace. We are blessed to be able to minister to thousands of our neighbors each year through the array of programs and services we offer. This is all possible as a result of our generous donors who believe in this ministry and the practical application of the assistance we offer, which is unique to the Real Life Center.

As you read through our annual report, we pray that you will experience how our holistic care strategy is able to meet many of the needs our clients face as we work with them to obtain economic security, become stable in their household, and help create positive change in their lives.

Every number has a name, every name has a story, and every story is an opportunity in which God invites us to participate in the wonderful things that He's doing here in our local community.

Thank you for praying, giving, and serving with us.

"So then, as often as we have the chance, we should do good to everyone." Galatians 6:10



Greg Georgianni
Executive Director



Stay up-to-date! Scan here to sign up for our monthly newsletter:



REAL LIFE CENTER TESTIMONIES

*"Let us think of ways to motivate one another
to acts of love and good works."*

Hebrews 10:24

"I have often wondered what I was born to do; what my purpose is, other than being a wife, mom, and grandmother. I know now that it is to work here at the Real Life Center. I just love people. I find it so important to help those that don't have what I have, and to make them feel good about their experience here. I want them to feel like we're buddies and we're just shopping together, because I want them to feel better for the thirty minutes they're in here."

-Melanie, Real Life Center Volunteer

"Thank you, thank you! You have been a blessing to me and my family in more ways than you know. Peace of mind is priceless. I have received peace along with practical help - thanks for the uplift."

-Anonymous, Real Life Center Client

"I tell everyone it's not like any other food bank. The people really care about you here and put a smile on your face."

-Jaqueline, Real Life Center Client

"I tell everyone who comes through here that they are special, because they are. I thank God because I look more forward to coming and working at the Real Life Center than I do my favorite activities. I'm thrilled to be here."

-George, Real Life Center Volunteer



REAL HELP. REAL HOPE.

Stacey's Story:

Long-term change - this was something that Stacey was ready to pursue for her family, but she knew it would come with difficulties and sacrifices. A few years ago, she decided to go back to school to Brenau University to complete the nursing program. Being a working mom with two daughters at home, she knew that committing to full-time studies would cause their income to drop significantly.

One day, as Stacey was out running errands, she spotted a list of organizations in the community that offered support with food and other resources. One name in particular caught her eye - Real Life Center. She knew that her family was going to need support during this season, so she decided to reach out. The Real Life Center was able to pay one of Stacey's utility bills, as well as offer food and other needed household items.

Over the past few years as Stacey was completing the program, she continued to come to the Real Life Center for food and clothing, and participated in our holiday programs where she received holiday meals for her family and Christmas gifts for her daughters. Having these things taken care of took the pressure off Stacey, allowing her to stay focused on her schooling.

After endless hours of hard work, Stacey completed her goal of graduating from the nursing program. Currently, she is studying to take the state board nursing exam and has accepted a position at Emory Hospital in the surgical trauma department. Way to go, Stacey! We are so proud of you and honored to have walked with you on your journey.



"Overall, my experience at the Real Life Center was really good. I really appreciate how you all were there for me throughout my studies. It was a very stressful program, and you guys were there for me. All the staff and volunteers were always happy and nice, and always offered to pray for me and my family."

-Stacey, Real Life Center client

PROGRAM IMPACT 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2



17,441

Client visits through our programs and services



696,255

Pounds of food given to the families we serve



\$168,961

Given in financial aid for rent and utilities



11,916

Hours served by our volunteers

REAL LIFE CENTER PROGRAMS

Market & Pantry

Being able to provide food to feed yourself and your family is a basic human need. Finding yourself in a place where you are food insecure is a scary thing.

One of the main ways the Real Life Center assists our clients is by providing the fresh food and household items that they need to help care for those in their home. In both the market and pantry, we strive to make the shopping experience an enjoyable and dignifying one.

696,255

Pounds of food distributed to Real Life Center clients



Mobile Food Pantry

Once a month, the Real Life Center, Grace Church, and the Atlanta Community Food Bank partner to distribute over 10,000 pounds of food to over 150 Georgia households. Clients drive away with over 50 pounds of fresh food, a smile, and hope.

125,537

Pounds of food distributed through our monthly Mobile Food Pantry



Real Life Center Orchard

Each year, volunteers dedicate hours of their time caring for the apples, blackberries, blueberries, figs, muscadines, peaches, and persimmons that grow in the orchard, so that the clients of the Real Life Center receive nutrient-rich, fresh fruit. Fresh fruit does not always fit into our clients' budgets, so the Real Life Center is happy to provide it.

2,280

Pounds of fruit harvested from the Real Life Center orchard.



REAL LIFE CENTER PROGRAMS

Clothing Closet

Clothes can be expensive - especially when you have multiple people living in your household. Our clothing closet consists of new or very gently used clothing items along with shoes, linens, and towels.

For many of the clients we serve, the clothing closet not only provides them with a new wardrobe, but also allows them to allocate the funds that would have gone toward purchasing clothes to other needs.



Summer Day Camp

2023 was the inaugural year of the Real Life Center Summer Day Camp. This action-packed week in July was offered free of charge to the elementary aged kids of our clients. The children in attendance participated in recreation, crafts, Bible study, and received a hot lunch each day.

It was a great week that gave us the opportunity to minister to families in a unique way and we look forward to doing it again in 2024.



346

Visits to the clothing closet

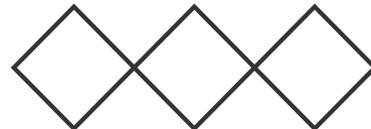
Backpack Buddies

The purpose of the Backpack Buddies program is to provide meals to children who rely on free breakfast and lunch at school as their main source of food security. During holiday breaks and on weekends, these children often face an uncertainty of where their next meal will come from. We partner with school counselors, social workers, and the nutrition departments within the school system to identify the children in need and communicate the program to their parents. We then provide nutritious bags of food to the schools prior to the end of the school week. The Real Life Center is the only Backpack Buddies program in Fayette county, and we are excited to grow our school partnerships in 2024.

2023:

- New schools added
- Program participation increased over 150%
- New varieties of food added to bags

REAL LIFE CENTER PROGRAMS



Job Coaching & Referrals

Connecting clients to resources outside of the Real Life Center is one key element in our four-part strategy. Our job assistance and referral program allows us to do just that – connect clients with employers in our area who are hiring. One of the keys for our clients to achieve stability in their household is identifying and securing solid employment. Unemployment was the number one reason our clients came to the Real Life Center in 2023.

Our program empowers our clients with the confidence needed to navigate the job market. As we walk alongside our clients while they are in need, we have a wonderful opportunity to get to know them, which helps us align their skills and job competencies with employers' needs. We had over 150 job assistance discussions with our clients in 2023.

We are thankful for all the local employers who make their requests known to us and offer to interview our clients when we reach out to them.



153

Individuals received job referral assistance

EMPOWER ENCOURAGE EQUIP



Educational Classes

Part of our mission is to equip people for life, and our educational classes are one of the ways we are able to do that. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to further their education because learning new information and skills helps us grow and work toward our goals.

We offer a variety of classes in the areas of money management, mental health and wellness, relationships, and spiritual growth.

209

Individuals supported through chaplaincy services

589

Individuals attended an educational class

Chaplaincy Services

2023 was the first full year for our chaplaincy program. Our Chaplain Matt worked alongside the staff at Dogwood Church to launch the Celebrate Recovery (CR) ministry. CR is a powerful life changing ministry that helps anyone struggling with a hurt, hang up, or habit that is negatively impacting their life. Since CR launched, multiple Real Life Center clients have been in attendance. Another highlight from 2023 was that Matt was asked by two of our clients, who are engaged to get married, to lead them in pre-marital counseling. Each week Matt and this couple have been meeting and looking at what a biblical and God honoring marriage looks like.

WHERE OUR FOOD COMES FROM

The food distributed through our market and food pantry comes from three primary sources; personal donations, food drives, and local retail grocery stores in partnership with the Atlanta Community Food Bank and the Feeding America program, the nation's leading domestic hunger relief charity. As a "partner agency," the Real Life Center is able to pick up donated items directly from participating retailers such as Walmart, Kroger, and Publix; items that otherwise would likely end up being thrown away.

All food items received are inspected for damage and freshness at least twice before they are distributed to our families. The procedures used are in accordance with standards published by the US Food & Drug Administration, the Atlanta Community Food Bank, and approved safe food handling practices.



GROCERY STORE
RETAILERS



PERSONAL
DONATIONS

FOOD
DRIVES



Over

80,000

pounds of food and
household items
collected through
food drives in 2023

Food Drives

Food drives are an integral part of Real Life Center operations. The Real Life Center partners with local churches, businesses, schools, organizations, and individuals to collect non-perishable food and household products to restock the food pantry. These local partners, some of whom have been partnering with the Real Life Center for over 20 years, are vital to communicating the need to the community and keeping enough food on our shelves.



ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



Chapel Service



Senior Social



Thanksgiving Meals



Christmas Meals



Christmas Gift Distribution



U-Pick Blueberries



Auto Repair Partnerships



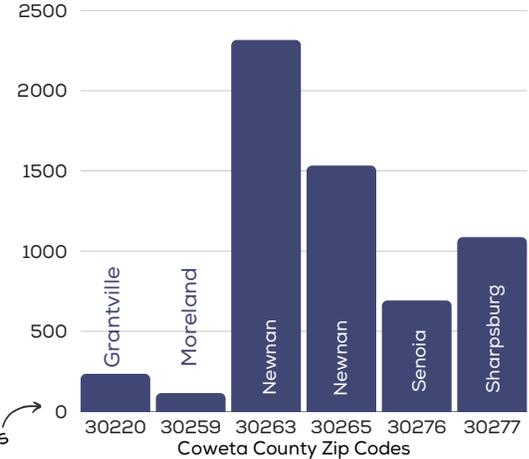
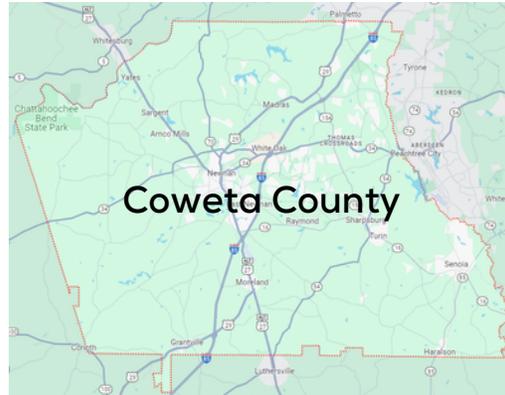
Helping Hand Grant

WHO WE CARED FOR IN 2023

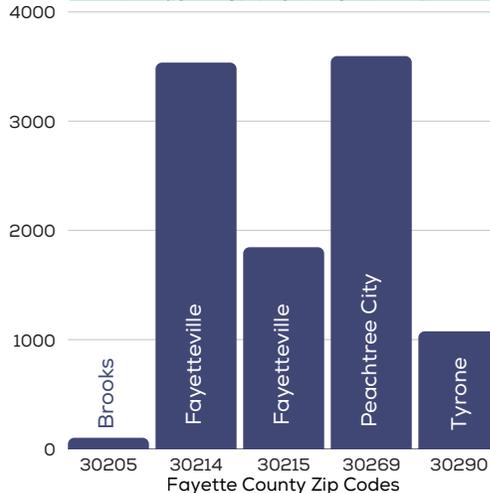
TOUCHPOINTS
BY
ZIP CODE*



Number
of Visits



Number
of Visits



Individuals We Served:

Seniors (60+): 15%

Some College/Technical School: 46%

Adults (18-59): 50%

High School Diploma: 45%

Minors (0-17): 35%

Incomplete: 9%



NEIGHBOR



HELPING

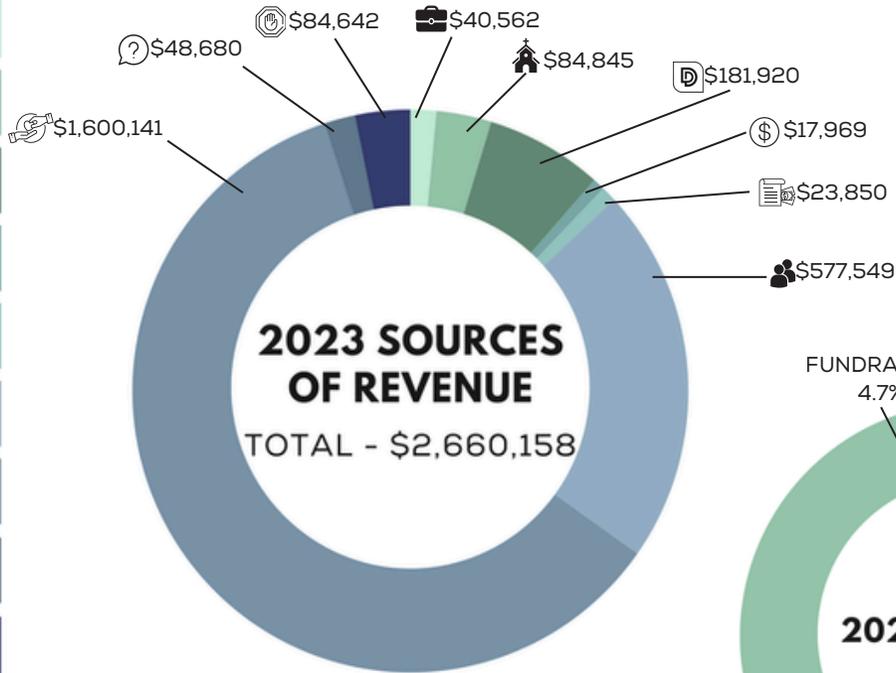


NEIGHBOR

*Also served 523 clients on an emergency basis outside of our normal service area.

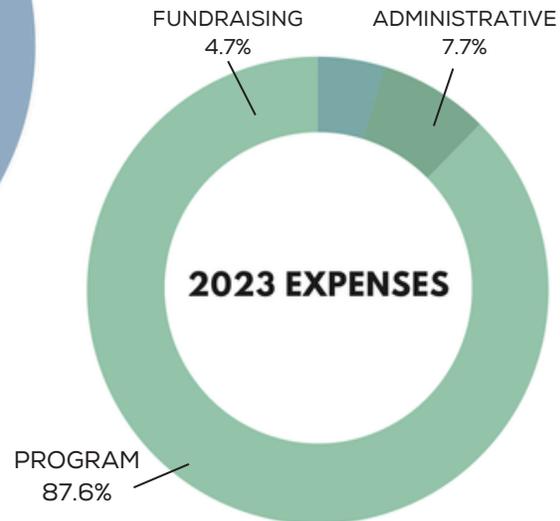
REAL LIFE CENTER FINANCIALS 2023

- BUSINESSES
- CHURCHES
- DOGWOOD
- FUNDRAISERS
- GRANTS
- INDIVIDUALS
- IN-KIND
- OTHER
- RESTRICTED



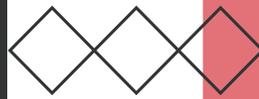
*Riches and honor
come from you, and
you are the ruler of
everything. Power
and might are in your
hand, and it is in your
hand to make great
and to give strength
to all.*

1 Chronicles 29:12



Your generous support in 2023 made a significant impact. Thank you for your commitment to our mission, enabling us to bring real help and real hope to those we serve. We look forward to seeing what the Lord will accomplish through our partnerships in 2024.

MEET THE REAL LIFE CENTER TEAM



2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

- Pastor Keith Moore
- Anne Quiello
- Beth Geeslin
- Craig Evans
- Joe de la Cruz
- Len Romano
- Rob Coker

The ministry of the Real Life Center could not effectively reach and serve our clients without our team of committed staff that believes in our mission, cares for those in need and brings to work each day a servant attitude.

We are grateful that our entire staff is focused on investing in our clients and providing encouragement along their journey to reach stability in their household.

“Coming together is a beginning.
Keeping together is progress. Working
together is success.”
—Henry Ford

REAL LIFE CENTER STAFF:

Greg Georgianni - Executive Director
Chris Schumaker - Operations Driver
Dana McKay - Business Director
Dixie King - Food Drive & Orchard Coordinator
Jennifer Nolder - Development & Special Projects Manager
Mark Dull - Operations Support Assistant
Matt Lowe - Chaplain & Volunteer Coordinator
Pete Trebotte - Operations Manager

Seth Crouch - Client Coordinator
Tessa Henson - Education & Marketing Coordinator





BUILDING HOPE TOGETHER

Ways to Get Involved

Join hands with the Real Life Center and make a meaningful impact in your community. Together, we can provide help and hope one donation, prayer, or volunteer effort at a time. Thank you for partnering with us to provide a safe environment, share the love of Christ, and promote long-term change.

Donate Funds



When you give to the Real Life Center, over 87% of your donation goes straight into our programs. Scan below to donate:



Donate Items



Help us keep our food pantry and clothing closet stocked by donating clothing, food, and toiletry items. A food drive is a great way to get others involved. Scan below for our most-needed list:



Partner in Prayer



We believe in the power of prayer. Join us in praying for the ministries and clients of the Real Life Center. Stay up-to-date with what's going on by signing up for the newsletter:



Volunteer



Our volunteers are the heartbeat of the RLC. Whether you're available for 2 hours or 10, we are thankful for your willingness to serve. Scan below for more information:



A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a red apron over a red top, is smiling and standing behind a white countertop. On the counter are several bowls of food, including a large bowl of salad and a bowl of purple onions. In the background, there is a stained glass window with a flame design. The scene is set in a kitchen or food preparation area.

Providing Necessities for Living, Equipping People for Life

REAL LIFE CENTER
Real help. Real hope.

A Mission of Dogwood Church

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www.reallifecenter.org

