

Providing help, hope, understanding, and advocacy for our neighbors in financial crisis, helping them move toward self-sufficiency and stability.

*In the past year, we have made great strides to implement programs and services that purposefully provide the greatest opportunities for our neighbors to reach their goals of financial stability and self-sufficiency. These programs are intended to complement our existing services by providing opportunities for greater upward mobility for our neighbors. As you read our newsletter, you will see that we are providing relevant financial education and empowerment to our low income workers as well as re-banking and loan services to build credit, fight off predatory payday or title lenders, and address larger financial emergencies. Thank you for being an integral part of our vision to change the odds for our neighbors in need!*

## community impact January- August



### 365 Families Served

The Ark serves as the communities emergency room for individuals and families facing financial crisis. We have provided over \$20,000 in assistance this year.



### 94 Evictions Prevented

Homelessness is a troubling reality for most of our neighbors. Our assistance helps keep working families in their homes.



### 96 Disconnections Prevented

Heat in the winter and utilities in the summer are all such basic needs that without them our neighbors could not meet all the other challenges in their lives.



### Financial Education and Lending 129 Individuals Served

The Ark provides relevant financial education and lending opportunities through our newly established program :Common Wealth Athens.



### 29 Special Needs

The Ark is able to meet unique needs in the community. By collaborating with community partners, we are able to provide medication and transportation assistance.

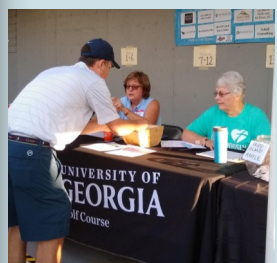


### Meet Jane

Working two or more jobs is a common reality for our neighbors who are trying to make ends meet. Because of your support, we are able to help hard working single mothers like Jane. Jane works two jobs to make ends meet. When her retail job closed its doors in December, Jane was struggling to remain financially stable. Facing a pending eviction, Jane came to The Ark in need of assistance with her rent. The Ark was able to help Jane keep her rent current and avoid eviction. She has since replaced her retail job with a more stable part time job and is hopeful about her future financial stability. It's because of your support that we are able to step in and help families like Jane remain stable and self-sufficient. Thank you for your support!



## Swing Fore Hope 2018!



## The 26th Annual Swing Fore Hope was a Fantastic Success!

The Ark thanks all of our sponsors, golf committee members and players who supported our mission through participation in the 2018 Golf Challenge.

The Ark's 26th Annual Swing Fore Hope Golf Challenge brought together **96 players** on August 11th at the University of Georgia Golf Course...all with a common purpose...to help support our mission to prevent poverty and homelessness while empowering our neighbors to move toward financial stability. Our 39 sponsors helped to **raise funds that will assist 120** working neighbors in a financial crisis. In 2018. The Congregational Challenge was won yet again by Chapelwood United Methodist Church! Golfers and volunteers enjoyed breakfast, snacks, beverages and a BBQ lunch provided by a Thrivent grant, Publix Markets, Pepsico, Coca Cola United, Waterman, and Jittery Joe's Coffee.

## Upcoming Events


 with the support of 

Sponsor  a

**FAMILY PLACEMENT PACK**

Benefiting Ark families and new foster families who need assistance preparing their home for a new family member!

Sept. 10th-Dec. 5th

### The Ark's 2nd Annual Family Placement Pack Drive has launched!

It's one of our favorite times of the year...time to use our sphere of influence to help others! We recognized the need of Ark families who, already facing financial difficulties and the strain of resources stretched way to thin, come to us with infants they can barely afford to keep in diapers and formula. Our hearts broke to hear of how foster families struggle to be prepared for a foster child who is placed with them, often without advance notice and bringing literally nothing with them. We reached out to our contributing congregations to be drop-box locations for our first drive last year and they responded with enthusiasm and incredible generosity, helping us to assemble over 200 packs that we distributed to our Ark families in need and to Clarke County's DFCS Foster Division. We are excited to get things launched earlier this year, with First Presbyterian, Crossroads Church, First United Methodist, and Faith Presbyterian participating. Go to <https://www.athensark.org/fpp> for more information!

### 28th Annual Gift of Hope



The Ark's holiday season donation drive begins just after Thanksgiving and extends through the end of the year. Gift of Hope allows individual's to pay tribute to friends, family members and fellow employees with a heartwarming gift that helps neighbors here in your community. Your tax deductible donation will be distributed locally in the Athens area to provide emergency assistance for rent, utilities, prescription medicine and basic life necessities. An acknowledgement will be sent to each recipient letting them know you have chosen to honor them through your gift to The Ark.

*"It's not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving."*

~Mother Teresa





uncommon financial solutions for low income families

## Creating Upward Mobility for Athens low wage workers

The Ark micro loan program (CWA) recently wrapped up its second grant year, serving a total of **155** neighbors, exceeding its goal, and bringing the total served since inception to **240**. The loan program was developed to meet a unique need in the community – the need for short-term credit for folks living on a fixed income and neighbors looking for safe and effective ways to build or rebuild credit often by refinancing high interest debts like title loans. Due to the success of the program, the Ark expanded its loans capabilities to meet neighbors on the front end by providing lending opportunities for emergency expenses such as car repairs, housing, and catching up after missing work due an illness or injury. Since April of 2016, the Ark has lent a total of **\$49,496.64** in micro loans and has a **87% repayment rate** while lending to individuals with an average credit score of **536**. Remarkably, after a 6-month loan repayment period, the average borrower experiences, on average, a **41 point increase** in their credit score which can be highly attributed to receiving an average of 3 or more financial education hours throughout the course of his or her loan.

### Self-sustainability and Access to Mainstream Loans

#### Meet Vicki



When Vicki first came to the Ark, she was in desperate need of credit counseling. She had recently picked up a high interest loan due to short hours from her job as a school bus driver over the summer. Her credit was also a mess because of an ex husband who failed to make court-ordered payments on their joint mortgage.

The Ark was able to refinance her high interest loan into a 6-month, 3% interest loan through the Ark loan program. The loan introduced her to the Georgia United Credit Union and boosted her credit score 33 points. This allowed her to refinance her auto loan through GUCU for a much lower rate which also lowered her monthly car payment by \$60.

Vicki is a shining example of the kinds of outcomes we wish for each of our neighbors in need. Your generous support allows us to offer unique programs which foster self-sufficiency and help to remove financial barriers once thought immovable. We can't thank you enough!

# Volunteer of the Year: Joan Duffett

We were honored to recognize Joan Duffett with The Ark Volunteer of the Year Award.

Each year, volunteers cast their vote for The Ark volunteer who embodies our mission and vision while unselfishly giving their time and talents to The Ark. Joan Duffett has served as a weekly volunteer and Board Member for over 13 years. We are so pleased to recognize Joan and her commitment, dedication and long time service to The Ark. Thank you Joan!



## Invest in Your Community!

Community participation is essential to our vision and mission in the community. Your involvement will help us prevent working families from slipping through the cracks and into homelessness. **This year our programs will financially assist over 500 working families, provide over 1,500 food bank referrals, and log 400 hours in lending and educational support.**

We are always in search of engaging volunteers, dynamic partnerships, and compassionate supporters. Let us know how you'd like to make a difference!

