The Agape Food Bank has seen substantial growth this 2018 season. We have served more families than we ever have, including one week at 158 families. We have received incredible support from the community, and would not have been able to serve 887 total families over 7 weeks this summer without our supporters. For the first time, we began working with the Bellingham Food Bank, who has provided fresh produce (such as potatoes, carrots, cilantro, apples, etc.), diapers, and eggs for our food bank, as well as setting up invaluable community connections for our program! We have also been working with the Ferndale Food Bank for donations of prepackaged rice and beans. They also began a second distribution directly at one of the migrant farmworker camps, which is so important for the families. We are thankful for the support from NW Harvest through the Bellingham and Ferndale Food Banks. We have connected with the Lynden Project Hope Food Bank for some non-perishable donations. In addition, we have worked for easier access to and awareness of each of the food banks by putting up posters at the camps so families know where they can go for more food assistance.

Another exciting connection is with Christ the King church in Bellingham. We have been working together to offer food box delivery orders to clients at the camps who are unable to make it to our Wednesday distributions. This has added between 10 and 30 families served by our food bank each week. We also received a grant from the Bellingham Grocery Outlet’s Independence from Hunger campaign, supporting CTK’s Foothills Food Bank and our very own Agape Food Bank. Not to mention the support we received from customers while tabling at grocery stores on Mondays in Bellingham and Ferndale, which brought in more donations this year from this type of outreach than ever before.

All of this amazing support has allowed us to give more and serve more. This summer we gave an estimated 23,000 lbs of food (not to mention hygiene and household products and clothes), or about 20-25 lbs of food per family! This included adding oranges and cucumbers for the first time, more than doubling previous years’ servings of eggs (families now receive 2 dz each!), and giving more of each kind of produce and bulk items (like rice and beans). In addition, we have been able to offer more diapers and wipes, hygiene products, and household products (like laundry detergent).

We are so incredibly grateful for the support we have received from each of these organizations and the wider Bellingham and Agape volunteer communities. Thank you so much! We are looking forward to what God will continue to make possible for our food bank and program in the future.
This past year preparing for and running Agape has been truly incredible. God has shown me just how much He can provide and how much He can do when we let Him. It was my first year in this new part-time Program Supervisor position focused completely on Agape. Having someone dedicate time specifically to Agape resulted in substantial community and programmatic growth. This allowed us to reach out to other organizations and groups who desire justice for the migrant farmworker community just as much as we do. It has resulted in more and better outreach at the camp, like doing more kinds of crafts (slime anyone?), science projects, and reading activities. It has also expanded our efforts at the food bank. We even received a grant to hire a sixth staff member for the summer, launched a scholarship program for migrant farmworkers and their families going into college this fall, and served more families than we could have imagined at the food bank. Going forward into this next year, we will be seeking funding to make the position full-time, and hope to further expand our efforts, outreach, and impact. I ask for prayers and support as we embark on the journey God has for us.

Assistant Supervisor Update: Alexa Sweeney

At the end of last summer, my second summer working for the Agape Service Project, I did not really feel like my time working for Agape was over. I had only committed to two summers but this year we received a grant from Holy Redeemer to hire an extra staff member. Through a lot of prayer and thought I decided to apply to be the Assistant Supervisor. It has been extremely helpful to have six staff members. We have been able to do extra things that we would not have had the time or the hands to do in the past. We were able to make slime and other special crafts with the kids at a migrant camp which was a huge hit! I have picked up extra items such as 100 bottles of laundry detergent for our food bank while the Assistant Directors and Directors were able to continue the day to day activities with our students. I have been able to take care of all the little things so our Assistant Directors and Directors are able to focus on the students and Melina, the program supervisor, is able to focus on big picture ideas for the future of the Agape Service Project. Having six staff members has taken pressure off all of us and it has been incredible to spend another summer at Agape serving the migrant farm worker community of Whatcom county.
Adult Leader Reflection

As an Adult Leader, Agape was a very rewarding experience. Not only did I get to serve and interact with the migrant community, but I got to witness my own kids as well as the other 29 Middle School kids we brought, give selflessly to serving and to each other. It was powerful witnessing our kids interact with the kids at the migrant camp and with the migrant community at the food bank. There were so many wonderful small group discussions where I got to hear our middle school kids express their frustration over the injustices the migrant communities face. Migrant farm workers are such a big part of our economy and yet they and their families are the most under served members of our community. We have to be able to do more and we’re taking our ideas back to our Parish and School to try and make a difference.

- Crystal Koory, Adult Leader St. Catherine of Siena

Blog Post from Youth Participants

At Agape I learned truly what it means to be a servant of God. I helped all I could, and I would go again if I could. God is present always in everyone, and proof of this is us coming together to help the migrant workers. God bless

Today started with breakfast, reflection, a divine mercy chaplet, and mass, but that wasn’t even the beginning of the plans. The whole of today was about celebration. After mass was lunch, then going to the pool to shower (yay!) and swim. But the best part of the day for me was being with the kids at the migrant camp. Their need for attention and joy in the simplest things made me really happy. Most of the time I was making beaded snakes for the kids, which they really like. I feel like we’re all called to do something like Agape, where you can see the purest forms of happiness, the struggles of our brothers and sisters in Christ, and the love that ties us all together, regardless of race or status.

- Week 3: Eastside Catholic & Our Lady of Fatima & St. Mary Anacortes - Thursday
This Summer at AGAPE
Want to know more? Contact us!

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Thank you to all our sponsors! Thank you to the Bellingham Food Bank, Ferndale Food Bank, Lynden Food Bank, and NW Harvest for food and donations. Thank you Joe and Diane for providing books for the food bank. Thank you to Christ the King for delivering food to families at camps. Thank you to Third Christian Reformed Church for giving us a space to host our food bank every week. Thank you to Johnson Team Real Estate and Fountain Rental for providing trucks for the food bank. Thank you to Barkley Haggen, Fairhaven Haggen, Sehome Haggen, Guide-Meridian Haggen, Ferndale Haggen, and the Bellingham Grocery Outlet for allowing us to table outside their stores. Thank you to Tanya Rojas and Clint Weckerly for community support. Thank you to Sacred Heart Parish and staff for allowing us to use their space all summer. Thank you to Arne Hanna and the YMCA for letting us use their facilities. Thank you to Norma and Manuel at Palateria la Flor de Michoacán for providing paletas for us each week. Thank you to Avenue Bread for providing bread for us all summer. Thank you to Bellingham Screen Printing for printing our t-shirts this summer. Thank you to Growing Veterans, Bellingham Country Gardens, and Breckenridge Blueberries for allowing us to serve at your farms each week. Thank you to Melissa Foxman and family for providing pictures for the families at the camps. Thank you to all the youth groups, St. Louise, Sacred Heart Enumclaw, Mary Queen of Peace, Sacred Heart/Assumption Bellingham, St. Mary Anacortes, Our Lady of Fatima, Eastside Catholic, St. Catherine of Siena, Our Lady of the Lake, St. Anthony, St. Theresa, and Holy Redeemer, that came for a week during the summer to serve with us. Thank you to all weekly volunteers for helping us serve. Thank you to everyone else who has supported us in any way and prayed for us in order to make this summer happen. A big thank you to Jesus for being our rock and providing for us. We could not have done it without all of you!

Agape Service Project

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