I truly believe God created us for one main reason and that is to be in relationship with Him and others. When God created Adam He talked and walked with him. He created Eve so that Adam would not be alone and he would have someone to physically walk and talk with. If God's main desire is for us to be in relationship with Him and others (love God with all your heart and love others) then what is the one thing Satan will come against? Relationships. He does this in 3 main ways.

**Keeping us too busy to connect.** If we are always going and doing things, we don't have time to connect. If we do make time for others, often we are so preoccupied with what we need or should be doing that we have a hard time being totally present in the moment. Think about the last time your child or spouse wanted to talk to you about something. Were you able to totally stop doing what you were doing, look them in the eyes, hear them and be present in the moment? Most of us have a hard time slowing down and truly connecting eye to eye and truly listening.

**Putting up walls to protect our heart.** Because there is so much pain and suffering in this world we can put up walls to protect us from feeling all the pain and sorrow. The problem is with walls is they stop us from truly connecting heart to heart. It also puts up a wall with God. It is very easy for me to put up a wall around my heart to protect it from all the trauma we deal with at Agape and deal with things from a logical head place. For a few months, I was feeling a distance between God and myself, even though I was spending quiet time with Him every day. One day I cried out to Him and asked why He felt so far away. He showed me that I had put up a wall to protect my heart, but that wall also kept Him out. He also showed me that while it kept some of the pain away from my heart, it also kept some of the joy, peace and hope away so I was feeling heavy and burdened. We may feel that walls protect our hearts from the pain and sorrow, but they also keep a distance between us and God; they keep out positive emotional feelings; and they keep us from connecting heart to heart with others.

**Caring what others think.** When we care what others think, we are not free to be true to ourselves or others. The enemy is always trying to convince us we are not good enough. In a world where we are surrounded with that message everyday, it is hard to come against. Every time we turn the TV on, pick up a magazine, or look at our social media, we are bombarded with messages that we need to be more like this or have more of that. As long as we buy into that lie, we will constantly be comparing ourselves to others and putting on a mask to try and convince ourselves and others we have it all together. The sad part is that in Christ we do have it all, we are complete, it is finished. Yes, in the flesh we still may struggle but that doesn’t change who we are in the Spirit. When we can be freed up to be imperfectly perfect in Christ and be comfortable where we are in the process and be true to ourselves then, and only then, can we be truly intimate with others.

In order to walk the victorious life that God created us for, we NEED to be in relationship with Him and with others. We need to slow down, take the time to seek God’s face, look into each other’s eyes, connect heart to heart and be real and transparent. Only then will we find true peace as we will be walking in our true purpose of loving God, others and ourselves.

**Praying that we will be able to transform this world with His love through real relationships sharing in His intimacy.**
Welcome Back for the 2019-2020 School Year! By: Kym Bachtell

It has been a wonderful summer for our staff to rest and retreat. Many adventures were had and memories created. Our students all went home for their summer break and several stayed in close contact with staff members. Some will be joining us this fall while others will be returning to their home schools. It brings us joy to watch them move forward towards their goals!

Every school year offers a fresh beginning, and this year is no exception!

We will be opening the school for boys on the 16th of September, and continue to accept applications for the boys.

We are also excited to introduce our newest additions to the Agape House family. Kimberly Mack (see picture to the right) will be our lead teacher at the Girl’s School; she has her Master’s in Social Work and experience with teens from hard places!

Erin Stroud will also join us this year as a part-time teacher’s assistant both in the girl’s and boy’s school. Erin was a volunteer last year as an expressive art teacher. Her heart for Jesus and teens is infectious! She helped her husband lead teen ministry for 20 years, and has training on connection in trauma, with a heart to see people healed in trauma, depression, anxiety, and grief. Erin is also a photographer and enjoys kayaking, camping and skiing.

Returning staff this year: Rick Schiltz will work with the girls in the morning and then transition to teach the boys in the afternoons. Rick also continues to teach physical education. Tina Dillman will return as well, working part-time in the girl’s school blessing them with her heart of gold and her mad skills in algebra and chemistry! Tina has been with the Agape House for several years, and we are so thankful to have her with us once again this year. Diane Frese, one of our RAs in the Home, will also be a part-time teacher’s assistant. She will be assisting in the transition to the Home after school.

Because of many faithful volunteers, we are able to offer broader class opportunities for our students, including: Photography, Personal Financial Planning, Weight Training and REAL Essentials.

Our overall focus will always point the students to a life changing relationship with their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In addition, we will continue to incorporate healthy habits for living in true freedom. The Home will have structured programming each day emphasizing the significance of adequate sleep, proper nutrition, keeping our bodies healthy through exercise as well as groups engaging topics like anger management and self-awareness. Art Therapy, Individual Counseling, Bible Class and Nurture groups will also allow students to grow in knowledge of themselves and foster a relationship with the Lord.

We have a full house of amazing leaders again this year! We are so grateful and know that God has a plan for the hearts he is weaving together this year. Great things are on the horizon and we are so thankful to be a part of God’s purpose.

Kimberly Mack, our new Head Teacher, and Shar Schultz, a 20-year veteran volunteer, along with so many others, spent hours preparing to welcome our students for the new school year. We are grateful to all of our volunteers who continue to come alongside of us ~ Praise Be To God!

If you are interested in helping provide and/or serve lunches to our teens, we can always use a few more who can help one time or once a month. Contact Debby at 262.275.6466.
Our year-end Recognition Ceremony in May was another opportunity to see and hear how God is working in the lives of the teens at Agape House. Not only are they courageous for pressing through the school year, their thoughts are worth sharing with you. During a creative art project with the girls, Diane asked them to write a few words about 4 topics. Afterwards, she arranged those thoughts into this poem. We hope that as you read the entire poem, you will see how God transformed their precious thoughts!

We are looking forward to a new year of watching them blossom in the arms of our loving God.

**My mind is filled with random thoughts.**
The fresh grass reminds me of summer on the lake.
My blanket is soft.
There are a lot of old people in the world.
I am hopeful that I will get all my credits for my sophomore year.
The chocolate cake on the counter is seductive.
Some people are very creative.
It’s fun to chill with the girls.

**Negativity creeps in slowly.**
Why did she think it would be a good idea to use that word in her collage?
My personality is dark and scary.
Anorexia Nervosa makes me look a sickly shade of grey.
I have crippling depression.
I am clumsy.
I become aware of the direction of my thoughts and I CAN change them.
I try to be strong when people hurt me.
I think I have natural beauty.
I am a compassionate person when it comes to kids.

**A step closer to the truth.**
I am no longer a victim because now I am a survivor.
I am a very loving person.
My thoughts, they are empowering.
I AM beautiful and that’s a fact.
I AM grand, so I can do anything.
I AM determined to beat my eating disorder.
I AM purposeful because I do my work in an orderly fashion.
I AM a helpful person.
I AM fun.
I AM brave.
I AM adventurous.
I AM magnificent
I AM funny.

**I AM UNIQUE AND THERE WILL NEVER BE ANYONE LIKE ME.**

We hope you can see that all of your donations are making a difference! If you feel led to support this ministry, please use the enclosed giving receipt to send in your donation.
Home & School for Boys: Are we ready for boys?

As we go progress with the renovations at 119 Phillips Avenue, preparing the building to be a home and school for boys, we have often been asked: are we ready for boys? In all reality, God has been preparing us for this mission for many years while we have been helping girls. Boys need the same thing as girls: LOVE & TRUTH and we know how to ‘dish that out’, so in that regard, we are ready! What we do need are:

House Parents and Finances

⇒ If you know someone interested in ‘Home Mission Field’, direct them to more information at: www.AgapeHouseHeals.org or they can call Pam at 262.275.6466.

⇒ We also need $20,000 to complete the renovation; can you help us finish this project? If you feel led to serve Him in this way, use the enclosed receipt to make your donation. Blessings . . .