

Polk County News.

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People Helping People founder named a Hometown Hero

Every hero has a story and Polk County is full of local heroes. One such hero is Gail Wilcoxon, founder of People Helping People located on Mull Road in Benton, Tennessee. Mrs. Wilcoxon has served many people through her organization. The West Polk Public Library is proud to award Mrs. Gail Wilcoxon with this week's Hometown Hero award. People Helping People is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide assistance and comfort, without discrimination or monetary gain, to anyone in their time of distress.

"There were times in my life when I needed help. I really appreciated those who lent me a hand", stated Mrs. Wilcoxon. "Now it's my time to return the favor"



Over 12,000 people from Polk County and surrounding areas received aid from the group in 2014. People Helping People provides several much needed services to the community. In 2014 they gave away 12,701 free bags of clothing and shoes to needy families.

The community kitchen at People Helping People assists those who can't afford to eat well. It is open four days a week and serves a hot nutritious meal for a small donation. Last year 3,760 plates of food were served. Monthly food boxes are also distributed to families through a partnership with Hope for the Hungry. Each box contains enough food to feed a family of four for a week.

The American Red Cross and West Polk Fire and Rescue team up with the organization to operate a crisis care ministry. Necessities are provided free of charge for individuals or families suffering from a major life changing event. The organization also has programs to distribute medical supplies, programs for those who have or are currently serving in our military, and operates a low cost day care facility.

Currently, Mrs. Wilcoxon is preparing for the Back to School Backpack giveaway. Backpacks full of school supplies will be given to local students. Basic school supplies and backpacks are needed to make this program a success. Applications for this program are available at Kidz X-Change.

People helping People is self-funded through sponsors, donations, grants, and fundraisers. They have a craft show every three months, a car show, and a thrift show to raise money for the above programs. The organization

has a sponsorship program starting as low as \$10. If you would like to help financially, donate items, or volunteer please contact People Helping People at 299-9062.