



## **Who We Are**

Hope for Appalachia, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, is a network of churches throughout Virginia and North Carolina that brings much needed basic necessities in "Hope Boxes" to children in some of the poorest counties in the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia, Kentucky and West Virginia.

## **How We Began**

God is Good! His will is perfect and His love for "the least of these" is immeasurable.

In April 2012, God led a small country church in Culpeper, Virginia to Lynch, Kentucky to begin a ministry of love and hope. The type of hope that only comes in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and the salvation only He can bring. Many times God's gentle whisper leads us to places we would never know existed. A pastor simply crossing a mountain while returning from vacation has now resulted in Hope for Appalachia being able to share God's love and blessings with thousands of children each year in the Appalachian Mountains.

In 2012, three bold public schools in Harlan County, Kentucky invited us into their schools during the Easter season. We were able to present each child a shoe box filled with school supplies, toothbrushes, socks, games, Easter candy, etc.. Most importantly, we were able to talk with each child and to share the love and hope of Jesus Christ through the Easter story. What we realized on that first visit was that many of the children lacked hope, and immediately our shoe boxes became "Hope Boxes", a name that has continued to this day.

God has blessed this ministry and has used it in a mighty way to bring hope to an area of our country that has been mostly forgotten. God has enabled us to grow each year, and He continues to open up new opportunities. We now partner with a network of churches throughout Virginia and North Carolina. God has led us from three schools in 2012 to being able to share the love of Jesus Christ in over fifty schools in 2017.

Henry Blackaby has stated that to experience God, we should find where He is at work and join Him there. God is at work in the Appalachian Mountains and He is calling us to join Him there!

## **Appalachia's Background**

The primary source of income of this remote region of rolling hilltops and muddy roads near the Tennessee and Virginia borders was the coal industry. But when the nation started to move away from coal-fired power plants, the giant companies closed down the mines, shedding 7,000 jobs in just three years. Nearly every county in eastern Kentucky lost jobs between 2000 and 2010. One-third of the region lives in poverty. Even before the mines started closing, children who grew up in Appalachia were often told to get out if they wanted to succeed. The region has been left without hope and many are in great despair and poverty.

When we arrived there on our first mission, we were left in shock! Some of the kids had never even seen a toothbrush, while others shared one between family members. Some kids wore only flip flops and shorts in winter as this was all they had. Many of the children were more excited to get the socks in their Hope Boxes over the toys!

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