



Annual Report
2023



ANNUAL REPORT

2023

Laurel Area Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers, Inc.

Faith in Action Program

A 501(c) 3 Nonprofit Corporation

Serving the area since 2002

Mission:

To enhance the quality of life for persons 60 years and older who reside in the Greater Latrobe, Unity Township, Derry, Derry Township, Ligonier and Ligonier Township areas by providing companionship and assistance.

Laurel Faith in Action, PO Box 854, Latrobe, PA 15650 • 724-539-4357

faithinaction@msn.com www.laurelfia.org

Find us on Facebook: Laurelfia

Table of Contents

Executive Summary – <i>Are you the One?</i>	3
Services.....	5
Testimonials.....	6
Summary of Program Services.....	7
Board of Directors.....	8
Staff.....	9
Community Connection	10
Events	11
Funding.....	17
Demographics of Volunteers and Recipients.....	18
Program Activity	19
Remarkable Return on Investment	19
Opportunities to Give.....	20

“Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve...You don’t have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

~Martin Luther King Jr.

Executive Summary 2022 “Are you the One?”

Situations can sometimes seem overwhelming. We look at opportunities and think, but I am only one person. I recently read a poem that gives new meaning to “One.” Even though we are one, we can affect change with each single interaction. The inspirational words of the poem, “One.”

One tree can start a forest;
One smile can begin a friendship;
One hand can lift a soul;
One word can frame a goal;
One candle can wipe out darkness;
One laugh can conquer gloom;
One hope can raise your spirits;
One touch can show you care;
One life can make the difference,
Be that One today.

~Unknown

Laurel Area Faith in Action has been the “one” serving our community for the last 21 years. The helping hands and caring hearts of the volunteers, staff, and board have provided assistance to so many of our aging neighbors. The Laurel Area Faith in Action family continues to grow as the number of older adults climbs. The need for assistance also increases in correlation with the graying of society. No one person can do everything, but what one person does, can change lives two at a time...both the recipient and the volunteer.

The challenges brought with the pandemic have lessened, yet we are still dealing with isolation, depression, and loneliness. Laurel Area Faith in Action is a volunteer driven organization. Recipients are never charged for the services they receive, yet the benefits are priceless. Many of our recipients share that we are the “one” they turn to first when they need a caring heart or a helping hand. Many of our recipients receive a call from their telephone reassurance volunteer. This one-to-one interaction fosters friendships and in many cases is the only person the recipients speak with during the day other than a telemarketer. The knowledge that a ride to a medical appointment is only “one” phone call away gives peace of mind to recipients. Throughout the year, the staff prepares and mails activity booklets to let our recipients know that the Laurel Area Faith in Action family has them in our thoughts and prayers. Every recipient receives an Advent gift, and so many have shared that we were the only ones who remembered them during the holiday season. One call, one ride, one piece of mail, one gift...this may sound simple and nothing noteworthy. But to the recipients of these “Ones” they make all the difference in the world.

The uncertain economic times that are facing our nation have also had a detrimental effect on the non-profit sector of our society. We know that the struggles are real. When we come together as the collective “one” caring for our neighbors the burden is lighter and the blessings are multiplied.

Laurel Area Faith in Action is committed to welcoming new volunteers and recipients into the family. We continue to honor the past, celebrate the present and dream for what can be in the future. Are you ready to be the “one” to make a difference? Are you ready to be the “one” to bring about change? Are you the “one” that is ready to give of your time, talents, and treasures to provide care and assistance to an aging neighbor? The need is great! We need each “one” to give from their heart. To reach out beyond the self into the world of the other. Are you the “one”?

This year has continued to be a challenge with the need in some cases being greater than the resources. The census shows that the population of the United States is getting older. Adults over the age of 60 number more than 46 million in the United States alone. Many sociologists believe the statistics are predicting that by the year 2050, there will be almost 90 million adults over the age of 60 in the United States. We continue to work in partnership with local churches, organizations, agencies, schools, colleges, and individuals to meet the needs of our recipients. We are always seeking out new ways to foster collaboration with addition volunteers and donors.

Queen Elizabeth II, is quoted as sharing, “It is often the small steps made by one, not the giant leaps of many, that bring about the most lasting change.” Laurel Area Faith in Action family continues to make the small steps, helping our recipients to overcome the everyday challenges that accompany the aging process. When each of the small steps are added together, the one and only Laurel Area Faith in Action family has and continues to make lasting change.

Will you become the “one” to bring about change? Are you the one? We welcome your gift of time, talents, or treasures.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy McLendon

Amy McLendon
Executive Director



*“Kindness is doing ordinary things
with extraordinary love.”*

~Raktivist

Services

Laurel Area Faith in Action addresses the issues of isolation, loneliness, and basic needs. Working with local churches, schools, businesses, organizations, agencies, and individuals, Laurel Area Faith in Action connects volunteers with program recipients. Volunteers provide care and compassion to recipients through a variety of services. The way some services are delivered has been changed to meet CDC safety protocols. The intent of the program is to complement existing community services, not replace or compete with them.

Caring Volunteers are trained to assist elderly individuals with the following:

- **Appointment Escort** – a friendly support person to meet the recipient at doctor appointments or go with them
- **Caregiver Relief*** – much needed 1-2 hour breaks for full-time caregivers
- **Correspondence** – help with paying bills, writing letters, completing forms
- **Errands** – picking up prescriptions, groceries, toiletries
- **Friendly Visitor*** – weekly friendly visits to talk, share interests, discover music
- **Handyman/Yard work** – minor repairs, installations, yard work, as needed
- **Referral Services** – link to other services in the community
- **Technology Mentor** – help with cell phone, computer, e-Reader, cable remote
- **Telephone Reassurance** – monthly calls to reduce isolation and remain connected
- **Transportation** – rides to the store, doctor, medical tests, etc.
- **Miscellaneous** – service requests taken on a case-by-case basis

Prospective Care Recipients requesting services qualify as follows:

- Live in Latrobe, Unity Township, Derry, Derry Township, Ligonier and Ligonier Township areas AND
- Aged 60 years and older AND
- Request services offered by the Program AND
- Complete and sign an application for services

Care Recipients can expect to receive an average of up to 2 hours of service a week. All services are provided FREE of charge.

***Caregiver Relief and Friendly Visitor services are provided on a very limited basis due to continued COVID concerns.**



Testimonials

" If it weren't for Faith in Action and the transportation they provide, I would be blind. It is such a pleasure to see my volunteer each month. "



" As I grow older, sometimes I feel like I don't matter. When my telephone reassurance volunteer calls, I feel connected and loved. "

" It meant so much to us for your help getting our groceries and our milk. "



" Thank you for arranging the group from Seton Hill to come to my home. What they accomplished in 3 hours was wonderful. I really appreciate the help; since, I have not been able to do this work in years. This was such a gift! "

" Your visits mean the world to my mother. Thank you so much! It's amazing how interested she is in the world around her. It is good to have a new perspective from you. Thanks again and many blessings to FIA. "



" It's been a long time since someone sang me "Happy Birthday." Thank you to the volunteers. The students at Blairsville-Saltsburg School District were wonderful! "



" We really appreciate the service of our driver to many Dr.'s appointments. He is great, patient, and friendly. Thank you! Keep up the good work and God Bless! "



Summary of Program Services

Provide Services to Meet the Needs of Community

Laurel Area Faith in Action currently has approximately 500 recipients and approximately 400 volunteers counting long-term as well as episodic volunteers. During 2022 there were more than 12,320.75 total volunteer hours provided during 4704 times of service. The impact of these numbers is staggering on the quality of life of the recipients.



Volunteer Recruitment

Laurel Area Faith in Action has remained active in the communities we serve and are always seeking additional avenues of volunteer recruitment. We have been actively seeking opportunities to reach out into our communities, speaking at area churches, school, businesses, and organizations sharing the available opportunities for volunteering. It is imperative that we continue to share the mission and vision of Laurel Area Faith in Action. We are thankful for the amazing volunteers who continue to give of themselves to help others.

Elder Abuse Task Force

Laurel Faith in Action joined the countywide task force in late 2016. This task force brings together professionals from the community at large to educate and protect aging residents from physical and emotional abuse, neglect, cyber scams and financial exploitation. Education and awareness campaigns are conducted throughout the year.

Strategic Planning

The staff and Board of Directors continued the process of strategic planning to sustain and grow the Laurel Faith in Action Program. According to an article published in *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* on June 14, 2022, the uncertain economy and rising prices are indicators that challenges are on the horizon for most non-profits, and Laurel Area Faith in Action is not exempt. The Board of Directors, the Executive Director, and staff are working closely monitoring changes. We are taking a proactive approach through the creation of various specialized groups to plan and implement strategies to maintain a positive philanthropic position. Specific areas are fundraising, easy donation of stocks and bonds, legacy donations, as well as seeking new grant opportunities. We are also seeking additional ways to reach our targeted demographic. This includes a marketing plan as well as a new and expanded community outreach plan. Looking forward, we continue our commitment to provide the much-needed services and inter-personal communication that is essential for maintaining good quality of life.

“A single act of kindness can change someone’s life.”

~Jackie Chan

Board of Directors and Staff

Officers 2022-2023

President: David Kirkland
Vice President: Dr. Kathleen Kelley
Secretary: Rex Ashbrook
Treasurer: Shannon Wilson

Directors - 2022

Kathy Bartolomucci
Johette DeRose
Dr. Daniel DiCola
Dorothy Lynch
Marie McCandless
Paula Maloney
Jody Marsh
Mary Jane Snyder
Jeremy Springer

Advisory Board

Courtney Baum
John Graziano
Reverend William Schaefer
Dr. Harry Speedy

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincerest appreciation to our Board of Directors for another year of service. The volunteer board is united by action and commitment to the mission and vision of Laurel Area Faith in Action.

The dedication and compassion of our board provides the basis for our continued success as an organization.



Staff

Amy McLendon, *Executive Director*

Taylor Ramezan, *Director of Marketing*

Sibby McLaughlin, Jackie Kollar, Dee Kane

Peggy Carey, Sue Hails *Office Staff*



Pictured left to right: Dee, Amy, Taylor, Sue, Jackie, Peggy, and Sibby

**DO ALL THE GOOD YOU CAN,
BY ALL THE MEANS YOU CAN,
IN ALL THE WAYS YOU CAN,
IN ALL THE PLACES YOU CAN,
AT ALL THE TIMES YOU CAN,
TO ALL THE PEOPLE YOU CAN,
AS LONG AS EVER YOU CAN.
~JOHN WESLEY**

Community Connection

Laurel Area Faith in Action depends on the partnerships with many area organizations, churches, schools, foundations, as well businesses and individuals. No one person can do everything. The connection with the community is the heart of our organization.

Together we will!

- **Excela Health Care System** – The partnership with Excela Health continues as we both work for the improved health and wellness of our community. Excela Health sponsors the “Faith in Action” monthly radio show airing the fourth Saturday of the month at 8:30 a.m. on Westmoreland Gold 1480 AM or 98.7 FM.
- **Latrobe Area Hospital Charitable Foundation** – Beginning in 2005, Laurel Area Faith in Action has received funding from this foundation. We are extremely appreciative of the continued support.
- **Adelphoi Village** – The collaboration with group homes at Adelphoi Village has been a tremendous success and the relationship continues to grow. Supervised youth cut grass, rake leaves, and shovel snow for more than 40 elderly homeowners year-round in the Greater Latrobe area. Since the work began with Adelphoi group homes in 2003, ten group homes have provided **over 26,942 hours** of service!
- **Saint Vincent College** – Since 2002, the program has worked with the college and students who help with household chores, yard work, friendly visits, as well as helping with socialization activities at area nursing homes and senior living facilities.
- **Saint Vincent Seminary** - Seminary students are enrolled in an ongoing practicum program with Laurel Area Faith in Action where they earn credit and gain pastoral experience. We are looking forward to the continuation of this program. Seminary students are paired with a recipient, and they meet on a weekly basis.
- **United Way of Westmoreland County Day of Caring** – Employees from local businesses participate through the United Way and directly with the Program to provide projects that directly help recipients remain living in their homes.
- **Elder Abuse Task Force** – The program serves on the countywide initiative to “reduce the number of victimized older adults through prevention, education, identification, and prosecution through a joint effort.”
- **Latrobe Presbyterian Church** donates office space for staff and meeting space for Board and volunteer meetings.
- **Senior Employment Program (SEP), Westmoreland County Community College** provides paid office staff who work on-site 16-20 hours per week; Laurel Area Faith in Action has been a training site since 2002.
- **Unity Township Supervisors, Derry Township Supervisors, and City of Latrobe staff** pick up hundreds of bags of raked leaves from recipients’ homes and provide financial and other support.
- **Thank you to all the others that provide volunteer services throughout the year. Even though not each individual community group is listed, your service and commitment are greatly appreciated.**

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

~Mahatma Gandhi

Events

Annual Celebration of Community – Our “Roaring 20’s” event was held in person at The Barn in Ligonier. This was a wonderful time of coming together to celebrate Laurel Area Faith in Action’s 20th Anniversary. We honored what was, commemorated what is, and hoped for what will be. We were blessed that the venue was donated for this fundraiser. We were so thankful for the generosity of The Barn. The delicious meal was catered by Carsons. Entertainment was provided by the students from Valley School of Ligonier. Everyone in attendance enjoyed wonderful vocal and instrumental performances. Staff and some guests were dressed in roaring 20’s attire. This was our first in person event since the beginning of the pandemic. What a blessing it was to come together once again in support of Laurel Area Faith in Action.



“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

~ Leo Buscaglia

ANNUAL VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER



VOLUNTEERING IS A WORK OF HEART.



Volunteer Appreciation Dinner - Our Volunteer Appreciation Dinner was held September 22, 2022, at the St. Vincent Basilica Parish Grove. We celebrated a day of Thanksgiving! Laurel Area Faith in Action is blessed to be in such a generous philanthropic community. Our beautiful venue was donated for this event by St. Vincent Basilica. The delicious turkey dinner with all the “fixins” was donated by the Area Agency on Aging. The house counselors and young men from two Adelphoi houses came and helped us with clean-up. Our Board of Directors came and helped to set-up, serve, and clean-up. The entire staff set-up, served, helped with the bingo, and clean-up duty the day of the event, but they were also busy with preparations for this appreciation event for several months. The evening ended with music bingo provided by DJ Darkshark. This was an event truly filled with fun, friends, fellowship, and food. Thank you to everyone. Our volunteers are the heart of Laurel Area Faith in Action.



LEAF RAKING



**When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully,
everyone is blessed.
– Maya Angelou**

Leaf Raking – Since 2002, leaf raking has been an annual event in the Laurel area. The 2022 was challenging. The leaves stayed on the trees late into the season. Then weather played havoc with our group’s plans. Each group was assigned to a particular recipient’s home, and they would work out a day that worked for each of them. Unfortunately, rain storms and snow storms on several weekends changed some of the scheduled days. We asked that all the raking be completed as soon as possible. We had approximately 100 volunteers raking at the homes of 18 recipients. Many of the leaves were collected by the municipalities of Unity Township, Latrobe, Ligonier, and Derry.

United Way Week of Caring – This is an annual event where teams from area businesses sign up to provide assistance to the aging members of our population. These teams are then matched with a recipient who has a need that matched the teams skills.

Thanksgiving Outreach Event – Thanksgiving booklets were sent to each of our recipients to share how thankful we are that they are part of the Faith in Action family. The booklets included a card, puzzles, riddles, and coloring pages. We received wonderful feedback on these booklets that were sent to about 300 people.



“Volunteerism is the voice of the people put into action. These actions shape and mold the present into a future of which we can all be proud.”

~Helen Dyer



Advent Project –Christmas is not what is under the tree, but what is in our hearts. Each year, with the help of our Advent Angels, the hearts of Faith in Action recipients and local nursing home residents are full at Christmas.

Throughout the year, volunteers work to provide each recipient with handmade Christmas gifts. These include volunteers who sew, knit and crochet. Last year's gifts were handsewn neck pillows and crocheted top kitchen towels. Once our volunteers have these beautiful creations complete, the rest of our angels get to work. Students from St. Vincent college, Children from Charter Oak Church Sunday School and Youth Group, as well as many other talented youth make hand drawn gift bags and Christmas Cards. Last year, Saint Vincent College Career Center helped decorate the card envelopes. Various community supporters and local businesses donated items to fill the bag including candy and calendars. Last year, Latrobe's Great American Banana Split pageant participants spent time helping to fill the candy bags.

So much love is put into this volunteer outreach initiative from start to finish. We want everyone to feel loved and remembered always, especially at the holidays. Our Advent Angels make that happen each year!

Advent bags were delivered to 497 recipients by staff and our Advent Angel Volunteers. This year we expanded our outreach to include gift bags to Gables, gift bags to The Grove, and gift bags were delivered to Kelly's for both the Latrobe and Greensburg locations, gift bags were also delivered to the residents of the National Church Residence located on Weldon Street. Our amazing advent angel crafters made 544 towels, and 675 pillows that were given to each recipient. LESCO Federal Credit Union sponsored the 2023 Calendars that were included in each gift bag.

The response to this year's advent project gift bags was overwhelming. We received many cards, letters, and calls expressing appreciation for the wonderful gift bag from the heart, but also for being remembered. So many of our recipients do not have family, and the gift they receive from us is sometimes the only gift they receive. Our delivery angels shared the joy and appreciation they received as they made their rounds.

Funding

Laurel Area Faith in Action continues to be blessed by the generosity of spirit and donations from many local organizations and individuals. Income reported in the Annual Report is based on a *cash basis* while the financial reports are based on an *accrual accounting basis*. *The exact audited income appears on the current tax returns available at www.laurelfia.org and will differ from this reporting due to the differences in accounting and reporting.*

Donors – Laurel Area Faith in Action was blessed by the generosity of 367 donors during 2022. The year 2022 continued to be like no other in the history of Laurel Faith in Action. Uncertain economic times and rising prices presented challenges to donation efforts. The continued philanthropic generosity of those who support Laurel Faith in Action did not waiver. We had many “God-bump” occasions during this year which we are greatly thankful for. The ongoing generosity and support of the mission and vision of Laurel Faith in Action provides hope and promise that we will be able to continue to reach out into our community and continue to be a beacon of light to our aging neighbors.

Fundraising Events and Projects

- **Celebration of Community** – “Roaring 20’s” was held in May. This event raised more than \$8,000.00.
- **Annual Appeal** - The annual appeal for 2022 brought in \$21,598.21 from 131 individuals with an average gift of \$164.87 up from 96.69 in 2021!
- **Significant Gifts and Grantors**
 - Laurel Faith in Action is blessed to receive every donation. Whether the donation is \$5.00, \$50.00, \$500.00, or \$5,000.00 it is considered significant for the continuation of the mission and vision of the program. Thank you to all who support Laurel Faith in Action.
 - Pittsburgh Foundation/Community Foundation of Westmoreland County
 - Derry Township Board of Supervisors
 - Excela Health – Sponsorship of monthly Westmoreland Gold radio show
 - Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation
 - Latrobe Area Hospital Charitable Foundation
 - McFeely-Rogers Foundation
 - Network for Good
 - United Way of SW PA – grant and designations
 - Valley School of Ligonier
 - Churches, including but not limited to Heritage United Methodist Church, Latrobe Presbyterian Church, St. Michael’s of the Valley Episcopal Church, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, and Unitarian Universalist Church.

Legacy gifts were received from several individuals in 2022, including gifts for the Laurel Faith in Action endowment at The Community Foundation of Westmoreland County and as designations from IRA distributions. If you would like to review our most recent 990 return, please visit our website at Laurelfia.org

Laurel Area Faith in Action continues to seek new funding opportunities through grants, donations, fundraisers, etc. A sincere thank you to everyone who supports Laurel Area Faith in Action with time, talents and treasures. We cannot do this alone. We need you!

Together we can! Together we will!

Participant Demographics 2022

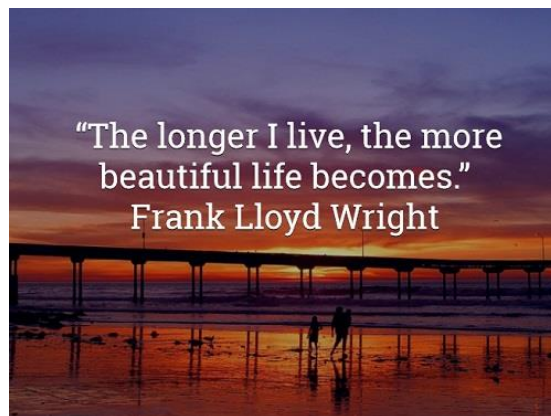
Adult Volunteers –

- 25 New volunteers
- 67% of volunteers are female and 33% are male.
- Most volunteers choose to assist with shopping, visits, special projects, transportation, and telephone reassurance. Volunteers can choose what services they wish to provide.

Participant Demographics 2022

Care Recipients –

- 40 New recipients
- The majority of our care recipients are between the ages of 71-90.
- Average Length of Stay in the program is 70 months.
- During 2022, 52 of our recipients died.
- Referrals to the program are by word of mouth from friends, family, volunteers and churches. We also receive referrals from service agencies and organization, outreach activities, social media, and marketing.



Program Activity – 2022

			<i>Since 2002</i>
Volunteers*	25 new	204 active*	
Care receivers	40 new	329 served	<i>1719 total served</i>
 Volunteer Activity			
	Hours		
2022 Total	12,321		<i>147,060 total hours</i>

Top # of individual services reported by category

2022	Services	Hours
Friendly Visits/calls	1,272	
Rides and errands	856	
Caregiver relief **	15	
Special projects***	2,561	
Total	4,704	12,321

**Includes adults only and does not include additional average of 75 youth from Adelphoi Village per year on regular basis. Additional periodic youth volunteers from SVC Service Learning, Valley Youth Network, churches, and scout troops totaling 300+ in 2021. Covid impacted the availability of some groups and how some of the projects were completed.*

*** Due to continued pandemic concerns, caregiver relief has been provided on a limited basis.*

**** Includes lawn mowing, leaf raking, and snow shoveling and special projects-indoors and outdoors*



Remarkable return on investments!

Each year, the *Independent Sector*, a coalition of nonprofits, foundations, and corporate giving programs, calculates the Value of a Volunteer Hour. According to *The Non-Profit Times*, published April 18, 2022, the value of a volunteer hour jumped almost 5% reaching an estimated \$29.95 per hour in 2022, up \$1.41 from the \$28.54 per hour rate reported for 2021. At this value per hour, the volunteer hours for Laurel Faith in Action have a value of \$369,006.46. The total hours of volunteer service that has been provided by Laurel Area Faith in Action from the beginning of the program through the end of 2022 is an incredible 147,059.75 hours. Multiplying these numbers by the value of volunteer hour of \$29.95 places the aggregated dollar value at \$4,404,439.51! The staggering impact of these volunteer statistics is by far a significant contribution showing the amazing acts of kindness provided by the Laurel Area Faith in Action program, a true community benefit organization.



Opportunities To Give

Laurel Area Faith in Action is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit. We rely completely on grant funding and the generous donations of our community to run our program. Donations can be made through our website @ Laurelfia.org, by check mailed to PO Box 854, Latrobe PA 15650, on our Facebook Page Laurel Faith in Action, PayPal or Venmo @ AMcLendonLaurelFIA.

Our Annual Appeal that is distributed in the Fall provides an opportunity to give back to the community by supporting this fundraising effort of Laurel Area Faith in Action.

We can receive gifts of scheduled IRA distributions, stocks, bonds, and mutual funds as well as Legacy donations. Most of these are processed through The Community Foundation of Westmoreland County. Please contact the office of Laurel Area Faith in Action for further information.

Every donation, big or small, makes a HUGE impact for our recipients! 100% of donations remain within the local community. They are used directly to support program efforts to serve the frail and elderly throughout our service area.

Facebook “friends”

Consider asking all your Facebook friends and family to give this year’s birthday gift to Laurel Faith in Action. They can donate directly on our page, using a credit card.



Laurelfia