

An Unexpected Crisis Leads a Family to HEAT

Last fall, Angela McCants received a call that changed her life unexpectedly. She was informed by the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) that a family member was unable to care for her children. They needed a place to live very soon. Letting them go into the foster care system was out of the question for Angela. She decided to take in three young children in addition to having five of her own, 18-year-old twins, 16-year-old twins, a 13-year-old daughter and a 7-year-old daughter.

Even though Angela's focus was doing what's right, opening her home to her extended family was not an easy transition. All three children arrived when they were still in diapers and needing bottles, with the youngest child being only 5 days old. Angela has been fortunate that her close bond with her children made them willing to help as much as possible. However, meeting the day-to-day needs of three other children under 3 years old eventually put a strain on the family's finances. One day after they came home from visiting the pediatrician, Angela found their heating service was disconnected.

Angela noticed a list of numbers to call for help on the back of her bill. She asked for guidance in prayer before choosing who to contact. HEAT was the first number she called. Angela felt relieved when speaking with HEAT's executive director, who she described as genuinely interested in helping her through this crisis. "Every time I called, he answered. He was always kind," said Angela. She was also



Angela McCants and her family.

relieved to have a "phenomenal" experience applying for HEAT funds with her local community action agency.

Angela and her family are doing their best to keep their finances steady after all the changes that were thrown at them. She's learned greater faith, compassion and humility through their challenges. She shared the mother of the three children is transitioning into a better life, which includes taking the necessary steps to care for her little ones. Angela's advice to anyone experiencing a tough time is to pray so you get a clear mind to assess the situation and move forward knowing there's help. She is deeply thankful to HEAT's staff and donors for making energy assistance possible when families need it the most. 🔥

Message from the Director



Countless lessons have taught me that helping people with a simple act at just the right time can leave a lasting impact. While driving with my wife and daughter late one night, we noticed a man getting out of his car on a busy road in Atlanta. He was a double amputee and preparing to change his flat tire. I managed to pull over safely near his car and asked if I could help him. He wasn't expecting a stranger to stop in the middle of his own plans to offer help. But he appreciated that I was available to lighten the burden of his frustrating situation.

I'm grateful for the constant reminder from HEAT's donors that there are many people who make time in their life to lighten the burden of another person. It's always a pleasure when I talk with our donors and learn about their values when it comes to giving. Our staff knows HEAT is blessed to have people who give simply because they enjoy being part of a solution for someone's hardship. Thank you to each of you who gives in various ways, so HEAT remains a reliable source of help for low-income Georgians.



Jeffrey Joseph, Executive Director

HEAT offers a list of options for donors to decide which method of giving works best for them. We're happy to find that a growing number of people sign up to become HEAT Sustainers. Our sustainer program is successfully helping us to maintain a steady stream of donations for energy assistance. If you'd like to learn more about how you can regularly give to HEAT, visit heatga.org/donate.

HEAT Receives a Second Grant Award from the Georgia Public Service Commission

When HEAT received a \$1 million grant from the Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC) in 2015, it was our most exciting achievement that year. Distributing an additional \$200,000 annually for the next five years meant we could reach more Georgians facing a financial crisis with energy assistance. So far, the grant helped HEAT serve nearly 4,000 households and more than 9,000 individuals within those homes. Because of our track record of good stewardship with those funds, the PSC awarded HEAT a second grant for a new amount of \$1.5 million.

The Public Service Commission started its grant program for low-income citizens in October 2001 with authorization to use money from the Universal Service Fund (USF). Prior to the program, the PSC found many seniors were struggling to pay their natural gas bills and being disconnected from service. The grant is an essential contribution for giving a warm home to Georgians who would have been left in the cold due to the high demand for assistance and limited funding.

"Our mission at the PSC is to work hard to ensure Georgians have access to affordable energy," said Commission Chairman Lauren "Bubba" McDonald. "The unfortunate reality, however, is that some of our poorer residents still need help. Since the 1980s, HEAT has offered assistance so the people most in need can pay their energy bills. Because it is such an invaluable program for our state, each year the PSC increases its funding to meet everchanging needs. To the officials and volunteers with HEAT, I commend you for your service," said Chairman McDonald.

HEAT will partner with community action agencies to distribute the \$1.5 million in \$300,000 increments for a five-year period. The grant is available to applicants who: 1) meet income eligibility requirements, 2) are served on Atlanta Gas Light's pipeline and 3) receive service from a natural gas company. HEAT's target outcome is to serve more than 1,500 households annually with the funds. Thank you to the PSC for its continued generosity, and the following agencies for their partnership:

- Central Savannah River Area Community Economic Opportunity Authority, Inc.
- Clayton County Community Service Authority, Inc.
- Coastal Plain Area Economic Opportunity Authority, Inc.
- Community Action for Improvement, Inc.
- Concerted Services, Inc.
- Fulton Atlanta Community Action Authority, Inc.
- Heart of Georgia Community Action Council, Inc.
- Macon-Bibb Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.
- Middle Georgia Community Action Agency, Inc.
- Ninth District Opportunity, Inc.
- Overview, Inc.
- Partnership for Community Action, Inc.
- Tallatoona Community Action Partnership, Inc.

Welcome to Our New Board Member



Rhoda Washington has worked in the energy industry for more than 10 years. Through her managerial responsibilities, she has experience in marketing and sales for commercial and institutional energy systems. She is also the affiliate liaison on the board of directors for the Energy Solutions Center, a nonprofit that promotes energy-efficient natural gas solutions and systems.

Rhoda is passionate about young people receiving an excellent education and exploring their potential for great achievements. This passion motivates her commitment as the vice chair for the board of education of Calhoun City Schools, a position she's served in for 11 years. Calhoun City Schools is one of the top six school districts in Georgia and has a graduation rate of 98 percent.

Rhoda's leadership roles also include serving for six years on the board for the Adventist Hospital Foundation in Gordon County. With active support from the board, funds were raised for the hospital's cancer treatment facility. Currently, a new women's health center is under construction.

Rhoda and her husband, Bruce, have been married for 36 years. Their daughter, Mackenzie, and son-in-law, Joseph, are parents to a 2-year-old daughter and newborn son. Rhoda and Bruce are active members of Rock Bridge Community Church in northwest Georgia.

2019 HEAT Award Winners at MGAG Annual Meeting

The Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia (MGAG) continues to be one of HEAT's most consistent partners for more than a decade. Because of the organization's support, its member cities play a major role in raising energy assistance funds through their utility customers. This year, MGAG's HEAT award was given to first-time winner the city of Perry and previous winners the city of Covington and the city of Claxton. The results are based on which cities raise the most money per utility customer.

An award is given in the following three categories:

Under 1,000 customers — **Claxton, Ga.**

1,000 to 5,000 customers — **Perry, Ga.**

More than 5,000 customers — **Covington, Ga.**

Congratulations to these cities for standing out in their efforts to give their neighbors a warm home for winter. Thank you to all our municipal partners across Georgia that provide for people in need by supporting HEAT's mission.

Welcome to Our New Municipal Partners: **Adairsville and Americus**

Toward the beginning of fall, HEAT prepares for a campaign to raise energy assistance funds from customers of Georgia's municipal gas systems. HEAT's municipal partners faithfully participate every year by spreading the word to residents with campaign materials including bill inserts, news releases, newsletters and public service announcements. Last winter, fundraising efforts in those communities raised nearly \$30,000 from natural gas customers.

Donations through these communities are special to HEAT because they're from the collective generosity of everyday people from different backgrounds to help neighbors through hard times. This is the type of kindness we depend on to maintain energy assistance for Georgians struggling with their bills. We are glad to welcome the city of Adairsville and the city of Americus to our network of dedicated municipal partners.

City of Adairsville

- located in Bartow County
- approximately 4,600 residents
- incorporated in 1854
- interesting fact: Adairsville is the first town in Georgia to be listed in its entirety on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987.

Adairsville is an interesting town to visit for people who enjoy history. It became known as the "Granary of the State" around the time of its incorporation. Two of its significant historical events include the Great Locomotive Chase during the Civil War in 1862 (later turned into a Disney movie) and the establishment of Georgia's first Boy Scouts troop in 1915.

City of Americus

- located in Sumter County
- approximately 17,000 residents
- incorporated in 1832
- interesting fact: Charles A. Lindbergh, a well-known aviator, made his first solo flight in May 1923 at Souther Field, which is now owned by Americus.

"Connecting with HEAT is an important step in furthering our mission to ensure quality utility services for our customers. The measure of a society is how well it takes care of its vulnerable. I'm proud that Americus is doing just that," said Charles L. Coney, city manager.

Weatherization Tips to Prepare for Winter

• Clean or replace your central heating filters.

The lower the temperature gets, the more your HVAC system works to keep your home warm. Don't let dirty filters slow down the air flow and make your system waste energy by working harder. Energy Star recommends checking your air filter every month during the winter to stay on top of cleaning and replacing it as needed.



• Use a draft protection for your doors.

You probably rarely notice the bottom of your door as you go in and out of your home. It's no surprise that air leaks are common under doors leading outside or into the garage. If there are doors where you need to block leaks, attach a draft guard at the bottom or install a door threshold on the floor beneath it.

• Install window films.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, your home loses about 30 percent of its heat through windows. Using thicker curtains is a simple, temporary solution that comes to mind for many people. But what if you don't want to block out the daylight so often? Window films that are designed to reduce heat loss are another simple solution and will help you feel less cooped up in your home.

• Seal and insulate your attic and basement.

When warm air rises in your house, you'll lose the much-needed heat you paid for through leaks. Losing air through your attic causes more cold air to be sucked into your home through other leaks, especially in your basement. Look for major cracks and gaps, which can be hidden under insulation, to seal them with caulk or foam. You can save up to 20 percent on your heating bills by using insulation with the appropriate R-value (ability to reduce heat flow) for your home. (source: Energy Star; U.S. Department of Energy) 🔥

The HEAT Factor is a newsletter published for friends and supporters of HEAT, Inc.

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Our mission is to provide energy assistance for Georgians in need.

HEAT, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) statewide nonprofit organization that raises funds to help Georgians who need temporary financial assistance with energy bills. Thousands of households need help, but only limited funding is available.

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*Helping low-income
Georgians meet their energy needs*



MANY THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS!



- City of Adairsville
- City of Americus
- City of Austell
- City of Blakely
- City of Claxton
- City of Covington
- City of Dublin
- City of Eatonton
- City of Hartwell
- City of Madison
- City of Perry
- City of Royston
- City of Social Circle
- City of Statesboro
- City of Sylvania
- City of Sylvester
- City of Thomson
- City of Tifton
- City of Toccoa
- City of Union Point
- City of Waynesboro
- City of Winder

Ben Hill United Methodist Church, Atlanta; Christian Faith Church, Thomson;
Hindu Temple of Atlanta, Riverdale; House of God – Church of God in Christ, Thomson;
Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Dublin; Nu-Hope Baptist Church of Laurens County, Dublin;
Peace Lutheran Church, Tifton; Ridge Avenue Church of Christ, Tifton.

Municipal Gas
Authority of Georgia