

Veteran Receives Help From HEAT During Financial Hardship

Like many people, 52-year-old Sean J. has experienced a year overshadowed by unexpected delays and hardship. As a 22-year veteran, he has a 100% permanent and total (P&T) disability rating from Veterans Affairs (VA). His severe medical condition has restricted his income to limited roles for remote work. Sean applied for disability benefits from Social Security with the hope of having another source of income to help meet his necessary living expenses. But he says approval for his application has been pending since December 2019.

Sean was initially told by his case manager and adjudicator that a decision from Social Security should take four to six months. However, the turmoil of COVID-19 has been a significant factor in almost doubling his wait time. In the midst of his worries about finding remote work and the back-and-forth communication to have his application approved, the last thing Sean needed was a disconnection notice for his heating bill. When he spoke with his gas

provider, he was glad to learn about the energy assistance available from HEAT. Sean felt relieved that he had one less bill to worry about after he was able to apply for help through his local community action agency.

“Sometimes people don’t realize how being in a position where you have to wait for the help you need can take a toll on you mentally,” he said. “You can get overlooked [as an individual without dependents] because people don’t realize how you’re being affected and trying to find ways to take care of yourself while you wait.”

Sean encourages more people to donate to HEAT. He had this message to share to thank our donors, “Thank you so much for helping provide energy assistance. Your donations helped me a lot by taking stress off me regarding my heating bill. This funding is really needed during these times.” 🔥



HEAT Receives Donation From Atlanta Gas Light to Help People Affected by COVID-19

Atlanta Gas Light has been a major supporter from the start of HEAT’s work to help struggling Georgians maintain their heating service. The company, which owns and operates the infrastructure that distributes natural gas to customers, is allocating \$1 million for supplemental low-income energy assistance under a mechanism created last year by the Georgia Public Service Commission. This substantial donation will be distributed to qualifying agencies that support customers who need help paying natural gas bills, repairing or replacing natural gas appliances, and weatherizing homes. HEAT is grateful to be one of Atlanta Gas Light’s four recipients with \$184,000 being allocated to help us meet the growing demand for energy assistance.

“Everyone deserves the comforts of home that natural gas provides. During the pandemic, Atlanta Gas Light employees have been intensely focused on maintaining quality service for Georgians, from operations to customer service and billing. This additional low-income assistance will help expand the number of families our community partners can support, keeping energy flowing to their homes,” said Pedro Cherry, president and CEO of Atlanta Gas Light. “It will also reduce the impact of customers’ natural gas use on their monthly bills - and on the environment - by increasing the efficiency of their appliances. We are proud to expand our existing partnerships with organizations across the state to grow their reach to even more residents.”

Atlanta Gas Light provides natural gas distribution to more than 1.6 million customers in Georgia, but customers receive bills from one of 16 retail natural gas marketers selling fuel across the state. As the public health and economic impact of COVID-19 continues to evolve, the company will continue working with community partners to support Georgians in need. Atlanta Gas Light advises customers to contact their natural gas marketer to ask about the availability of financial assistance or payment programs. 🔥

If you have loved ones or neighbors who are struggling to pay their home heating bill, encourage them to see if they are eligible for help from HEAT’s additional funds for customers of the following natural gas marketers:

- Constellation
- Fuel Georgia
- Gas South
- Georgia Natural Gas
- Infinite Energy
- Just Energy
- Kratos Gas & Power
- North American Power & Gas
- SCANA Energy
- Stream Energy
- Town Square Energy
- True Natural Gas
- Walton Gas
- Xoom Energy

For more information about eligibility and how to apply, visit heatga.org/get-help or contact HEAT’s office at 678-406-0212.

Spirit of Giving: LuAnn



LuAnn has been a faithful donor for nearly 10 years. HEAT had the pleasure of talking with her about why she is a long-time supporter of our mission to provide energy assistance.

Q. How did you first learn about HEAT?

A. I think I found out about HEAT through something I received in the mail.

Q. Why do you think HEAT's mission is a valuable cause for Georgia communities?

A. I am a realtor, so it is important to me to help people stay in their homes since I work to help people find a home. I do not know what I would do if I did not have heat in my home. Years ago, I moved to Boston and it was the first time I saw homeless people. I could not sleep some nights knowing people were out in the cold.

Q. Why do you think having a spirit of giving is important?

A. I believe from a Christian view of life that I am called to give help to people in need.

Q. Is there a particular person or a situation you experienced that inspired you to be a giving person?

A. My family instilled a desire in me to help other people. We had a modest home life and there were times people gave to us. I would also say the economic downturn of 2008-2009 had a significant impact on me because I knew many of my past clients who lost their jobs, which led me to use my commission checks to help the people I could in some way.

Q. What is a memorable lesson you learned from a time when you needed help?

A. I have learned God is able to provide just what you need even in the very last moment, whether it is money or a door opening for another opportunity. 🔥

Partner Spotlight: Clayton County Community Services Authority

Clayton County Community Services Authority, Inc. is one of Georgia's community action agencies that plays an essential part in efforts to distribute energy assistance funds statewide. HEAT spoke with Dr. Rhonda G. Kindred, executive director, Melsetta Veasey, community engagement manager and Brooke Chestnut, community support LIHEAP program manager, about our partnership and their agency's work.

Q. What does Clayton County CSA value about its partnership with HEAT?

A. We value helping significantly more households maintain their heating service. Many people have lost their jobs during this pandemic. HEAT's funds have made a big impact by giving people a second chance to get on track with their bills.

Q. How has COVID-19 impacted the agency's operations?

A. Normally, we could have 200 people in our application room. Now applicants must mail their paperwork or submit it in the drop box at our office. We receive online



Melsetta Veasey (left) and Brooke Chestnut (right) of Clayton County CSA.

submissions if needed, although, we need to be conscious of private information sent over the internet. We also acknowledge that our partnership with utility companies has made our work a bit easier because of provisions they made for applicants. For the agency, we stagger our schedules because we cannot have our full staff in the office. We are all in this together and trying to move forward

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Donate to HEAT. Many individuals affected by COVID-19 need your help today.

Donate online at heatga.org or complete this form and mail it with your check to the address below.

A donation of \$350 helps one deserving family pay their utility bill. However, donations of any amount are needed and appreciated.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ Email _____

Home Heating Energy Provider _____

**HEAT, Inc.
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as safely as possible while still meeting the community's needs.

Q. Describe the demographic of people served by Clayton County CSA.

A. Approximately, 30% are senior citizens and 50% are single-parent households. The people we help are typically at or below poverty level.

Q. What is one of the agency's most memorable achievements?

A. We had our first drive-thru food distribution, which was tremendously successful because of our partnerships with government leaders, religious leaders and citizen volunteers. Approximately 500 people who were in need showed up within 12 hours of us making the information public. We had a limited number of CSA staff filling food bags. Our success would not have been successful without the members of the Rock Church of Atlanta under the leadership of Rev. Michael Clinkscales. It was a true community effort. The turnout let us know the need was very great and has led us to continue food drives throughout this pandemic.

Clayton County CSA has been serving Clayton, Henry and Fayette counties for 55 years. The agency is in the process of developing a partnership for phlebotomist training. Currently, in addition to energy assistance, the staff can help low-income residents with the following needs:

- Head Start and Early Head Start for preschoolers
- Rental assistance (help for negotiating with rental managers and landlords)
- Water utility in partnership with Clayton County Water Authority
- Weatherization
- Food pantry (starting in October on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.)
- Food drive (toward end of each month on Saturdays, serves 300 to 500 people)
- Prescription drug assistance
- Legal aid
- Case manager services
- Women and men empowerment
- Fatherhood support initiative

HEAT Has Officially Moved!

After a long search, HEAT has a new home in Smyrna, Georgia. Our staff continues to follow safety measures for COVID-19 as we divide our time between working remotely and in the office. Settling into our new location has been a welcomed change during a year where we have overcome various obstacles.



Welcome to Our New Board Member

Since its foundation as a nonprofit, HEAT has been immensely fortunate to have a group of good-hearted and resourceful business and consumer leaders as its board of directors. Upon the retirement of one of our long-time board members, HEAT had the opportunity to welcome in its newest member Helen Stembridge.



Helen Stembridge

"I have been acquainted with HEAT throughout my career as a natural gas provider and have seen the benefits it provides to residents throughout the state," said Stembridge. "Serving on the board allows me the opportunity to work with a team of committed and engaged individuals to ensure the organization has the resources to provide energy assistance for people in need."

Helen has more than 35 years of experience in Georgia's natural gas industry. She has worked with SCANA Energy for 22 years in various leadership roles, focusing on business development, community relations and regulatory affairs. In her current role as manager of regulatory affairs, Helen ensures the regulatory compliance for both SCANA Energy and SCANA Energy Regulated Division. In addition to serving on the HEAT board, she serves on the board of directors for the Georgia Chamber and the advocacy committee of the Natural Gas Association of Georgia.

"Helen understands the struggles of people in need from having served in business and community organizations for several years," said Jeffrey Joseph, HEAT's executive director. "With her experience in leadership positions, she brings invaluable skills and expertise that will help ensure HEAT advances in its mission to serve less fortunate families and individuals."

Helen is a graduate of Georgia Southern University and has been married to her husband, Asbury, for 42 years. Residents of Macon, Georgia, they have two adult children and two grandchildren. 🔥

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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Heating Energy Assistance Team (HEAT), Inc.



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*Helping low-income
Georgians meet their energy needs*



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Peace Lutheran Church, Tifton; Ridge Avenue Church of Christ, Tifton.

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