

A Mother of Two Turns to HEAT After Suddenly Losing Her Job

Angela W., 44-years-old, found out during this time of crisis that her job was in jeopardy. As a substitute elementary school teacher for 15 years, she was paid only once a month. Angela lived on a strict budget as a single mother of two children. But when the Georgia Governor's Office issued an executive order closing all public schools in response to the new coronavirus, she found herself unemployed indefinitely. The loss of her job also meant swift and significant changes for her children.

Angela's oldest child had to return home from college after receiving a campus-wide move-out order in response to the growing threat. And although she had already paid her monthly childcare fees for her 2-year-old son's daycare provider, which equaled half of her monthly expenses, the facility closed its doors due to advised precautions. With both of her children at home full-time and no monthly income, Angela was unable to keep up with buying food

and paying bills. Her situation became further strained when her past-due energy bill put her family at risk of eviction due to disconnected utilities.

Thankfully, Angela learned about HEAT through her energy provider. She wasted no time applying for help through her local community action agency and received enough money to pay her bill. "It's a blessing what they are doing," Angela said of HEAT's donors. As a reminder during these uncertain times, she added, "You never know what people are going through." 🔥



Message from the Director

I would like to thank all of you who have been generous friends and advocates for HEAT through the years. For the past several weeks, we have all faced many different hardships and restrictions due to COVID-19. With heavy hearts, the HEAT staff gives our condolences to those of you who have lost loved ones. Despite these persistent trials, I am glad we can still receive hope in knowing we are all in this together and that many of us are finding ways to help each other.

HEAT's staff is committed to doing our part to serve the well-being of you and your family. We are working remotely and harder than ever to remain open so energy assistance is available for Georgians in need. We are thankful we recently received a grant from Gas South and a donation from the Williams Foundation to help us during this extraordinary time. However, the need for energy assistance is becoming greater than we ever imagined. If you need help to pay your energy bill, we encourage you to contact HEAT at 678-406-0212.

For those of you who may be in a fortunate position to keep up with your living expenses, we encourage you to consider making a contribution to HEAT as we help our neighbors who are struggling due to COVID-19. While some of us are able to maintain our income or have access to a

reliable source of funds, an overwhelming number of fellow Georgians do not have the money to cover their necessities. The Georgia Department of Labor estimates that more than 608,000 Georgians will lose their jobs before the summer.

During the last 37 years, HEAT has brought relief to nearly 110,000 families with more than \$27 million in energy assistance. We could not have reached that achievement without the dedicated support of people like you. If you would like to donate to HEAT's COVID-19 efforts, visit heatga.org to give your gift online or mail to HEAT at P.O. Box 451008, Atlanta, GA 31145.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I deeply thank those of you who continue to play a major role in keeping us safe and providing necessities during this crisis, especially our nurses, doctors, police officers, grocery store employees and bus drivers. I and the rest of HEAT's staff appreciate all of you who have responded to the call to get involved the best way you can to help people who are less fortunate. We hope you continue following the necessary steps to stay safe during this difficult and unprecedented time.

Jeffrey Joseph,
Executive Director

Gas South Takes Initiative to Help People in Need Affected by COVID-19



Gas South recently announced its plan to donate more than \$1 million this year to support families throughout Georgia and Florida impacted by COVID-19. HEAT was pleased to learn we were chosen to be among four of Gas South's primary nonprofit partners that would receive additional annual funding to help affected communities. The company donated \$150,000 to HEAT for assistance with utility payments, which is five times the amount of its donation last year.

"The difficulties presented by COVID-19 to our community and nation are unprecedented, and we want to support our neighbors with these donations while encouraging others to join," said Kevin Greiner, president and CEO of Gas South. "We have partnered with each of these incredible organizations

in the past, so we're confident in their ability to put these donations to work effectively and immediately."

With this donation, HEAT is able to provide assistance to more than 1,000 individuals unable to pay their energy bills. Gas South normally gives smaller donations to several local causes each year, focusing mostly on causes that serve children in need. But the company is now committing more dollars to fewer organizations and is expanding its focus to include programs providing utility payment assistance and support for unemployed restaurant and hotel workers.

Gas South began distributing donations in April with \$850,000 given out that month. This type of thoughtful contribution from our corporate partner is encouraging for us during these trying times when now more than ever people are reaching out to HEAT for help. A big thank you to Gas South for doing its part to help families maintain their basic needs. 🔥

Georgia Natural Gas Makes Generous Donation to Help People in Need

Georgia Natural Gas (GNG) has been one of HEAT's most faithful partners for more than 20 years. This past winter, GNG continued its longstanding support by donating \$200,000 to our work helping people facing hard times with their energy bills.

"Year after year, Georgia Natural Gas has remained committed to supporting HEAT's mission to provide energy assistance for low-income Georgians," said Jeffrey Joseph, executive director of HEAT. "This substantial contribution has the potential to assist nearly 1,500 individuals, including seniors and disabled veterans, who meet the low-income guidelines."

As the oldest statewide fuel fund in Georgia, HEAT provides energy assistance as a joint effort between concerned citizens, state and local governments and businesses. We are truly grateful that by working together to raise funds we have been able to increase the number of households served. However, the need for energy assistance in Georgia remains high each year with low-income households spending about 15 percent of their income on home heating. That is five times the percentage spent by the average middle-income family. Through the generosity of our corporate partners like



Jeffrey Joseph (right), HEAT's director, accepts Georgia Natural Gas \$200,000 contribution from Michael Braswell (center), president and John Jamieson (left), senior vice president of retail energy operations.

Georgia Natural Gas, our neighbors in need throughout the state have additional financial support.

"Georgians should never have to choose between the heat they need to stay safe and warm during extreme temperatures and other much-needed basics, like medication or food," said Mike Braswell, president and CEO of Georgia Natural Gas.

A big thank you to GNG for donating more than \$3 million in financial contributions and in-kind services to HEAT throughout our decades of partnership. 🔥



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.
P. O. Box 451008
Atlanta, GA 31145



HEAT Meets With Southeast Atlanta Residents to Help With Their Home Heating Needs

Our work as staff often involves meeting with corporate and government partners, so it is always a welcomed change of pace when we participate in community activities to engage the people we serve.

The branch manager of Louise Watley Library at Southeast Atlanta, Joia Ellis Dinkins, noticed patrons frequently inquired about heating assistance programs and contacted HEAT to request sharing one-on-one information to address their needs.

During a four-hour period, local citizens

visited one of three tables manned by HEAT representatives to ask questions about resources for heating assistance. Each person was asked questions to assess their energy related needs and received information about how to get help from HEAT and other resources depending on their circumstances and if they met eligibility criteria. Our representatives provided information including weatherization programs and tips, furnace and water heater programs and utility discounts for senior citizens and low-income families. 🔥



Board of Directors Receive Expert Motivation During Training to Kick Off 2020

By Chris Strippelhoff, HEAT board of directors' nominating/personnel committee chairperson and chief membership officer at the Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia.

"Well begun is half done" is an old adage some people use to encourage their children and employees to become self-starters. That cliched saying captures the spirit of HEAT's board of directors training for 2020. The training took place January 8 well before the world was turned upside down by the coronavirus pandemic. Considering all that is happening in our state, it was a fortunate decision for HEAT to step outside of its normal pattern of board meetings for the year.

HEAT invited two experts for this special session: Bliss Jones, a shareholder in the firm Jones & Kolb, and Gordon Gilley, the chief professional officer of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Bartow County. The primary responsibility of a board is to provide guidance, resources and fiduciary oversight. Jones focused on the importance of having a diverse, talented and committed group of individuals to collaborate in fulfilling that goal. He explained the top 10 responsibilities of any board.

1. Establish or affirm the organization's mission.
2. Provide strategic vision for the future.
3. Set or approve the general direction and financing of the organization.
4. Ensure the mission remains responsive to change (externally and internally).
5. Provide an accountability structure to management.
6. Provide stewardship of financial resources tied to the mission.
7. Represent the organization to the community.
8. Ensure transparency.
9. Monitor and evaluate performance of management.
10. Provide accurate reporting to stakeholders.



HEAT's board of directors (four members not pictured).

Gilley's presentation also provided excellent takeaways for our team. His two main points were that a board's strength is linked to the level of success achieved by the organization and a board of a successful organization plays a key role in resource development. He elaborated on both points by providing key guidelines to help us strategize for success. These are a few of the guidelines Gilley shared:

1. Members should reflect a wide range of geographic, civic, business and specific need areas.
2. Never underestimate your individual and collective ability to provide life-altering, and in some cases, lifesaving services to people in need.
3. Be able to state the organization's mission in a compelling way.
4. Establish and nurture relationships.
5. Regularly inform donors of the return on investment for supporting your cause and thank them often.

Each guest speaker shared motivating advice with the board to close out our training. Proceed unapologetically and with passion for HEAT. Be knowledgeable. Be unafraid to ask questions. Be an advocate. Be an ambassador. Be generous.

With a strong vision established to take on the new year, our team left the training inspired, refreshed, connected and ready to continue HEAT's mission. 🔥



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*Helping low-income
Georgians meet their energy needs*



Remember These Guidelines to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

If you or someone living with you feels sick, stay home and contact your medical provider.

Most people with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and can recover at home. Be sure to rest, stay hydrated, eat healthy and take appropriate over-the-counter medication as needed.

If you are age 65+ or have a serious health condition, stay home and away from other people.

Serious health conditions include chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, heart conditions, immunocompromised, severe obesity, diabetes, chronic kidney disease and liver disease.

If you are a young or otherwise healthy person, it is still possible for you to become infected. You can decrease the possibility of putting your health and the health of others at risk with these precautions.

- Avoid social gatherings of more than 10 people when possible.
- Try to stay at least 6 feet away from people if in a public area.
- Use a cloth face cover instead of facemasks meant for healthcare workers if going to a public area.
- Avoid bars and restaurants by using drive-thru, pickup or delivery options instead.
- Do not visit nursing homes, retirement or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance.

- Cover your mouth and nose with the inside of your elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If you are unable to wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.

(sources for guidelines as of May 2020: Georgia Department of Public Health; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; World Health Organization)

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.



@heat.fuelfund



Heating Energy Assistance Team (HEAT), Inc.



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