

## William R. is no stranger to loss...

After his mother's death a few years ago, he moved to Georgia to be closer to his siblings and nephew (who is blind). Sometime later, William met his future wife Bonita in church and life changed in a happier direction. As their relationship grew, she saw that he was capable of aiming for better opportunities than he envisioned for himself. The two eventually got married after being together for a year.

Bonita continued to be William's motivation to not limit himself by encouraging him to seek management positions, so he could move on from working in the kitchen at a popular local restaurant. William said she spent time helping him update his resume and search online for jobs. Her search led to finding an opening at a well-known restaurant franchise. With a new mindset about his career, William succeeded in being hired as a manager.

Life was going well with William starting his training and Bonita maintaining her nursing home job of 20+ years. But misfortune struck when the couple became sick. William noticed he could not taste or smell. And Bonita was suffering from bouts of vomiting. When they went to a doctor's appointment at the hospital, they were diagnosed with COVID-19. William was told to quarantine at home. But medical staff advised that Bonita, who was very weak, needed to stay for further care and be put on a ventilator. William was now restricted to visiting his wife for only one hour a day.

Bonita believed she could recover, but William knew that would not be the case the moment they were told she needed a ventilator. About a month after Bonita was admitted, the hospital called with the heartbreaking confirmation that she passed away. The last time William saw his wife was the day before and she was incoherent.

William had to pay the funeral and burial costs on his own, including sending Bonita's body to New York where most of her family lives. The major expenses wiped out his finances. Among his mounting bills was a past-due notice for his heating service. William called his gas provider to see what help was available and was grateful to hear good news when he learned he was eligible for HEAT funds.



Although describing himself as not one to ask for help, when asked how he felt about receiving energy assistance, he said, "It was a blessing. Sometimes you got to bite the bullet and reach out." William added about HEAT's donors, "Without them, people would be in a world of mess. I thank God for them."

Despite another painful loss, William is fortunate his job remained secure while he quarantined and handled important needs regarding his wife's death. He completed his training and officially works as a manager, making considerably more income than he did in his previous job.

William, age 54, is very thankful to have experienced two happy years of marriage with Bonita. He will readily tell you she made an unforgettable impact on his life and was the type of woman who is hard to find.

"She was a wonderful person," said William. "That was always her goal to help me find my own." 🔥

## Thank You for Your Faithful Support

With another winter behind us, the HEAT board of directors and staff would like to express our deep gratitude to every donor who makes it possible for us to help families keep their home warm. Despite the myriad of challenges many of us have faced and continue to face, we are so fortunate to have a community of faithful, compassionate supporters who

helped us serve more than 112,000 vulnerable families for nearly four decades. On behalf of all the HEAT fund recipients, we would like to thank our corporate supporters, energy providers, community organizations and the numerous individuals who give online as well as through the mail, monthly energy bills and employee contribution programs. 🔥

# Supporter Spotlight: ProFloors



**ProFloors**  
LLC  
NATIONAL FLOORING SPECIALIST

HEAT is proud to welcome ProFloors as part of its network of community-minded corporate donors and partners. ProFloors was founded as a full-service flooring contractor in 2000 by Rob Walker, who also serves as president. The company's work focuses on flooring, construction and renovations for commercial and multi-family market segments. Walker attributes the company's longevity to its consistency in providing high-quality services with competitive pricing for clients.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis of 2020, Walker said his team felt fortunate to be an essential business and not experience job loss. However, knowing that so many people were experiencing immense suffering of various forms, ProFloors was moved to seek a way to give back to the community. Walker was inspired to research assistance for utility bills after reading an article about a man who paid past-due utility bills for several of his neighbors who were impacted by COVID-19.

"That same week on the radio, I heard through a heating and air company commercial about HEAT's energy assistance

program," he said. "I felt HEAT was doing legitimate work and felt comfortable reaching out." Walker spoke with HEAT's executive director, Jeffrey Joseph, to learn more about the organization's mission to determine if a partnership with ProFloors would be a good fit. After further communication, Walker decided HEAT was an excellent choice to receive a corporate donation.

"I believe helping people in need is important. 2020 was an extremely challenging time. And you never know when the shoe could be on the other foot," said Walker.

HEAT is pleased to receive ProFloors' generous donation, a combination of company funds and contributions from individual staff members, which will help many Georgians pay their past-due energy bills.

"Because of the hardships caused by COVID-19, we have seen requests for energy assistance increase by 56%," said Joseph. "We are thankful for ProFloors' concern for our neighbors and the company's generous support. The team approach of individuals and the business community to help families in need is the key to HEAT's success." 🔥



## City of Madison Exemplifies the Meaning of Community Through Pledge Billing

The city of Madison has shown impressive participation with pledge billing to help families in need pay their home heating bill. Utility customers pledge a donation amount for HEAT to be added to their gas bill each month. Madison implemented the initiative in 2019 under the leadership of city manager David Nunn. Prior to offering pledge billing, the city included letters in its bills to customers requesting contributions. As a result of pledge billing, donations increased nearly 200% in comparison to contributions received through request letters. The city first started its partnership with HEAT in 2007

and has strongly supported helping vulnerable families and individuals during its 14-year history.

Karen Stapp, finance officer for Madison, said the city believes a positive impact is made on the community when less fortunate citizens receive energy assistance to cover their home heating needs. She shared the city promotes awareness of pledge billing through social media (@cityofmadisonga), bill inserts and postings on Madison's website.

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**Donate to HEAT. Many individuals affected by COVID-19 need your help today.**  
Donate online at [heatga.org](http://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.*

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Home Heating Energy Provider \_\_\_\_\_

**HEAT, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 849  
Smyrna, GA 30081



# Welcome to the Board

## Matt Schlosser

Director of Business to Business Markets, Retail Operations Division, SouthStar Energy Services, LLC



Matt Schlosser serves as director of Business to Business Markets in the retail operations division of SouthStar Energy Services (SSE), which does business in Georgia as Georgia Natural Gas. During the past two decades, SSE has become one of the largest and most successful non-regulated retail natural gas suppliers in the United States. The company serves more than half a million customers across a 10-state footprint, which continues to expand.

Matt leads a group of regional energy managers who make sales calls on businesses in four states with the mission of creating superior value and providing an outstanding customer experience. The managers offer unique natural gas solutions for SSE's commercial and large industrial portfolio of customers. Matt is also responsible for activities pertaining to profit and loss, forecasting, budgeting and market strategy to ensure smart, profitable growth and retention. He has been in the natural gas business since 1995 and has worked with SSE since its inception.

Matt graduated from Georgia College and State University with a bachelor's degree in business administration. He also served in the United States Army and Georgia Army National Guard, retiring at the rank of captain.

Matt resides in Suwanee, Georgia with his wife Laurie and has a son, Zachary (age 26), and a daughter, Hannah (age 24).

## Remember These Post-Vaccine Guidelines for COVID-19

These recommendations can help you make decisions about daily activities after you are fully vaccinated. They are not intended for healthcare settings.

### What You Can Start to Do

If you have been fully vaccinated:

- You can gather indoors with fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask or staying 6 feet apart.
- You can gather indoors with unvaccinated people of any age from one other household (for example, visiting with relatives who all live together) without masks or staying 6 feet apart, unless any of those people or anyone they live with has an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- If you travel in the United States, you do not need to get tested before or after travel or self-quarantine after travel.
- You need to pay close attention to the situation at your international destination before traveling outside the United States.
  - You do NOT need to get tested **before** leaving the United States unless your destination requires it.
  - You still need to show a negative test result or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 **before** boarding a flight to the United States.
  - You should still get tested 3-5 days **after** international travel.
  - You do NOT need to self-quarantine **after** arriving in the United States.
- If you have been around someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to stay away from others or get tested unless you have symptoms.
  - However, if you live in a group setting (like a correctional or detention facility or group home) and are around someone who has COVID-19, you should still stay away from others for 14 days and get tested, even if you do not have symptoms.

*This is a direct article share from the CDC.*

Source: "When You've Been Fully Vaccinated: How to Protect Yourself and Others." CDC, 2021, [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html). Accessed 6 Apr. 2021



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*Helping low-income  
Georgians meet their energy needs*



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"Families need help now more than ever," Karen added. "The city has been fortunate to have citizens continue their support to this program. We are hopeful participation will increase in the future as we continue to recover from the pandemic."

HEAT's executive director Jeffery Joseph states total annual donations increase an average of two-and-one-half times that of one-time donations when a monthly contribution process is implemented. Utility customers who would like to make recurring donations to HEAT through their gas bill can sign up by:

1. Completing a form on the city's website and mailing it to:  
City Hall  
P.O. Box 32  
Madison, GA 30650
2. Applying in person at 285 N. Main Street, Madison, GA 30650 (temporary city hall)

We applaud the city of Madison and the dedication of its residents to help their neighbors. HEAT is grateful for their continued support. 🔥

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

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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.

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



@heat.fuelfund



Heating Energy Assistance  
Team (HEAT), Inc.



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