

January
2025

Happy New Year!

Issue No. 44

Community Cares Newsletter



"Greeting Cards have all been sent... the Christmas rush is through..."

But, if you have one wish still to make, make it a special one for *you*. 2024 was a seemingly difficult year for many, but for some, many great milestones were still achieved. Make 2025 your year to **SHINE**, to grow, and to change as things flow. You've got this!

Important Dates

Wednesday, January 1

New Years Day—TCAC **CLOSED**

Monday, January 6

All data collection due for month of December.

Tuesday, January 7

Monthly Member Check-In via Zoom at 2pm EST.

Saturday, January 11

SOS Service Day at A Place to Stay Blount Co. from 12PM—3PM—**Volunteers Needed!**

Monday, January 20

MLK Day National Day of Service—TCAC **CLOSED**

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New Year, New Members

As the winter season begins to unfold, we are excited to welcome a new group of AmeriCorps members to the Community Cares AmeriCorps program (as well as all of you that have re-enrolled)! These dedicated individuals bring with them a spirit of service and a commitment to making a tangible difference in the communities we serve. Their involvement represents more than just an opportunity for personal growth—it is a reflection of the powerful impact collective action can have in addressing local challenges and fostering positive change.

AmeriCorps members have long been a vital part of our nation's efforts to strengthen communities, and this new cohort is no exception. The Community Cares program, which focuses on providing critical support to underserved populations, is fortunate to have such a passionate and diverse group of individuals join our mission. From assisting with food security initiatives at Grow Oak Ridge and WilCo

Events to educational outreach helping with housing stability and health services, each member of the Winter Corps will contribute to the continuous effort of improving the lives of individuals and families facing such challenging hardships. Through their dedication to a year of service, they will also deepen their own understanding of their surrounding community's needs and how they can be part of long-term solutions.

What makes all of you Community Cares members particularly special is the emphasis on **collaboration**. Whether it's working alongside local organizations, volunteer groups, schools, or directly with residents, the spirit of teamwork is at the heart of all we do. Our new members will quickly learn that the challenges facing communities are complex and multifaceted, and not one person or organization can tackle them alone. By working together, we create a network of support that extends beyond mere service to produce lasting relationships and shared responsibility.

For our new AmeriCorps members, the Winter Corps experience is also an opportunity for personal and professional development just like those who started in August. The program provides not only the chance to serve but also the tools to build skills that will last a lifetime—skills in leadership, problem-solving, communication, and project management. Many members enter AmeriCorps with the desire to make a difference, but they leave with a deeper understanding of what it takes to sustain change and the confidence to continue serving in new and impactful ways.

As we greet and welcome in the Winter Corps members with open arms, we also thank them for choosing to dedicate this time to service. The work you all will do is essential to the well-being of our wonderful Tennessee communities, especially during the time when many face increased challenges. The Community Cares program is proud to have such a dedicated group of individuals joining us, and we look forward to working alongside everyone to create a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

Together, **we can** achieve great things, and we are thrilled to embark on this journey with our new AmeriCorps members.

**Welcome to the team—your commitment to service is inspiring,
and we are very excited to see all that we can accomplish together.**



AmeriCorps



Community Cares

MLK Day

MLK Day as a National Day of Service: Honoring the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He is one of the most revered figures in American history, known for his unwavering commitment to justice, equality, and nonviolent resistance. His leadership during the Civil Rights Movement fundamentally reshaped the United States and its values, leaving a legacy that continues to inspire individuals and civility movements worldwide. In recognition of his contributions, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, celebrated each year on the third Monday in January, was designated as a National Day of Service—a day for Americans to come together and contribute to their communities in the spirit of Dr. King's enduring message.

The campaign to establish a holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. began shortly after his assassination in 1968. The movement to recognize his life and work gained momentum through the efforts of his family, civil rights activists, and many African American communities. Despite initial resistance from some states and political leaders, the national holiday was **finally** signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1983, to be observed for the first time on January 20, 1986. While MLK Day initially faced challenges in terms of widespread recognition, its significance gradually grew, becoming a moment for reflection and remembrance of King's monumental contributions to justice and equality.



In 1994, Congress passed the MLK Day Holiday and Service Act, which officially transformed Martin Luther King Jr. Day into a National Day of Service. This legislation encouraged Americans to honor Dr. King's legacy by engaging in volunteer work that addressed community needs. The purpose was clear: rather than seeing the holiday as just a day off from work or school, people were encouraged to use the time to serve others, advancing the ideals of justice, peace, and opportunity that Dr. King championed throughout his life.

The idea of MLK Day as a National Day of Service is a fitting tribute to the man who dedicated his life to the betterment of others. Dr. King believed deeply in the power of service to bring about social change. His famous words, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" capture the essence of his philosophy. Service was not merely an act of charity for Dr. King; it was a vital component of the struggle for racial equality and social justice. By encouraging people to volunteer on MLK Day, the National Day of Service reinforces the notion that creating a just and equitable society requires active participation from all people, regardless of their background or circumstances. MLK Day of Service is unique in that it serves as a nationwide call to action, one that brings people from all walks of life together to address urgent issues such as poverty, hunger, education, health care, and more.

On this day, individuals, families, and organizations across the country participate in projects such as tutoring children, cleaning up public spaces, building homes, and providing food and clothing to those in need. Volunteers also engage in activities that promote social justice, such as organizing workshops, hosting rallies, and working to combat inequality in various forms. One of the key aspects of the MLK Day of Service is its emphasis on unity and community. Dr. King's vision for a "Beloved Community" was one where people of all races, backgrounds, and creeds worked together to achieve common goals of equality and mutual respect. The National Day of Service brings this vision to life by encouraging people to collaborate with others in ways that build understanding and forge connections, creating stronger, more resilient communities.

MLK Day as a National Day of Service stands as both a celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s enduring legacy and a call to action for every American to participate in the ongoing work of justice and equality. By dedicating time to serve others, we honor Dr. King's life and teachings, and we contribute to the vision of a more just, compassionate, and unified society. On this day, as we come together to serve, we are reminded that the struggle for justice and equality is far from over, but through collective action, we can continue to move toward a brighter, more equitable future **for all**.



Join us for a Service Day!



A PLACE
TO STAY

Partnering to End Homelessness
in Blount County

SOS DAY

STREET OUTREACH SERVICES DAY

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11TH, 2025, 12 PM - 3 PM

NEW PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

703 W. BROADWAY AVE., MARYVILLE, TN 37801

HOT MEAL

PHONES

EDUCATIONAL HELP

MEDICAL HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH

HAIRCUTS

CLOTHING

DIAPERS

KIDS CRAFTS

LOCAL PRODUCE

LEGAL HELP

JOB SERVICE/RE-ENTRY

DENTAL HEALTH

READERS WITH CASES

BOOKS

SHOWERS.

HYGIENE BAGS

AND MORE...

SEE YOU THERE!

SOS Day—Service Day

Dear AmeriCorps members, we are excited to invite you to participate in an impactful and rewarding event, Street Outreach Services Day (SOS Day)! A Place To Stay partners with numerous non-profits and other entities to provide services like: a hot meal, haircuts, case management, Walgreens pharmacy consultants and vaccinations, clothing, books, eyeglasses, job services, bikes, legal assistance, showers, kids crafts, snack bags, hygiene bags, employment opportunities and training, resume assistance, Second Harvest food, and so much more.

This will take place on **Saturday, January 11th, 2025, from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM (EST)**. This is an excellent opportunity to give back to one of our great communities and make a real difference in the lives of those in need. This is a group effort, and requires as many of you as possible. Please let us know if you will be joining us along with A Place to Stay AmeriCorps members Cary, Heather, Kayla.

On SOS Day, we all will be engaging in various activities to directly assist the individuals who are experiencing homelessness or facing many other challenges. Your involvement can help provide vital resources, support, and kindness to those who need it most.

As AmeriCorps members, you know the power of service, and this event will allow you to extend that commitment to those who truly need our support. This also counts as a Service Day! Whether you're directly interacting with individuals, distributing resources, or assisting with logistics, your presence will have a significant impact on all involved.

We hope you'll join us for this meaningful Day of Service! Together, we can make a lasting difference!

Please RSVP by contacting Becca and/or Hayley and don't hesitate to reach out with any questions. We can't wait to see you there!

Thank you for your continued dedication to service, and we look forward to seeing you at SOS Day!



Kudos To You



Some of you had the wonderful advantage of meeting Martha at a past Community Cares pre-service training in Cookeville where she described her (now former) service site. She served through us at Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center, where she did everything between caring for elderly individuals in their homes, to working in the fields with youth and adult groups planting trees and cultivating the grounds. She also assisted in many natural burials, organizing funerals, and cared for the families who lost loved ones who were interred on the grounds of the Center.

In the spring time of 2024, she made her way through the Cumberland Plateau to Coalmont, Tennessee to Mountain T.O.P. The organization Mountain T.O.P. began in 1975 when a youth group from Blakemore United Methodist Church in Nashville, TN, decided to put their faith into action. They spent that first summer working with families, meeting expressed needs, and making repairs to homes. Today, they host hundreds of volunteers from around the country throughout the year. Through a philosophy of partnership, Mountain T.O.P. is a sustaining and life-changing force in the areas we serve, making strides in reducing substandard housing and offering young people opportunities for growth. Mountain T.O.P.'s mission is, "through Christian community and faith-based relationships, we help meet the physical, spiritual, social, and emotional needs of all the people we encounter."

Mountain T.O.P.'s Board of Directors appointed Martha Pierce as the Executive Director of the organization in November 2024!

Martha's experience with faith-based camps and retreat centers totally equips her to fully step into this role. Her oversight includes managing support and seasonal staff, overseeing facilities, financial management, program and fund development. Martha most recently served as an AmeriCorps member serving with our program here in East Tennessee.

Her 20 years of experience as director for several camps and conference centers around the USA gives Martha an understanding and insight into how each facility is unique and yet similar. She has been a member of the National United Methodist Camp & Retreat Board since 2021. Mountain T.O.P.'s outreach to the South Cumberland Plateau is an exciting new area for her and we cannot wait to see what she can and will do!

"I am honored and excited to be a part of this vital ministry to the South Cumberland Plateau and look forward to being an integral part of this community."

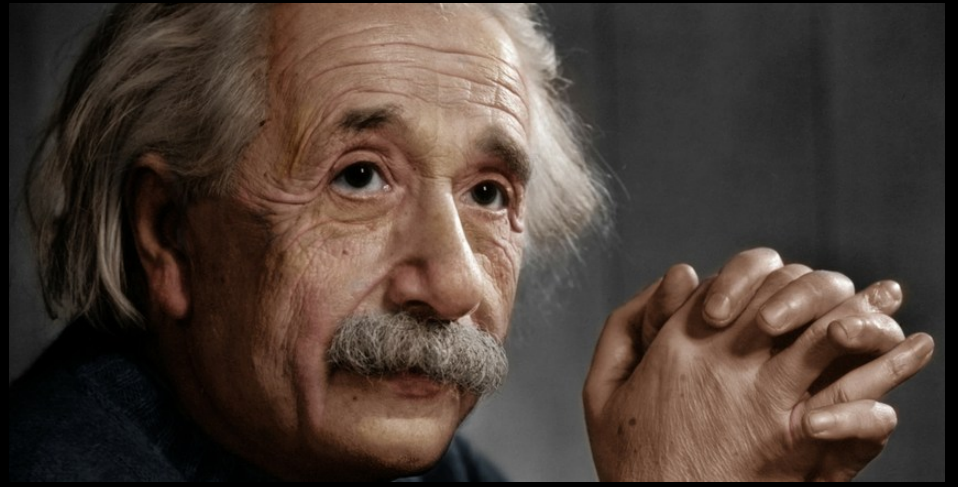
— Martha Pierce, Executive Director

Martha is a "jane-of-all-trades" kind of girl with a mindset to serve others, and has proven time and time again, she has a heart of gold. She completed her last term of service last year, however she found a way to continue serving individuals through her new role! A huge congratulations and all the kudos to Ms. Martha Pierce!

Congratulations

Time Travel

As time circles around us moving to-and-fro, ever-changing, and shifting, Albert Einstein's theory of relativity comes to mind, ebbing on the question of time travel; is it possible? In short, no, and it might not ever be possible in our lifetime. His theory revolutionized our understanding of time and space, stating time is not a constant, but can vary depending on speed and gravity. According to his special relativity, as an object approaches the speed of light, time for it slows down relative to a stationary observer. Take for instance a moving train and a stationary object would experience time differently, with observers on the train perceiving time as passing normally, while someone outside the train might observe the train's clocks running slower due to the effects of relative motion. His general relativity further proposed that massive objects like planets warp space-time, causing time to pass more slowly near them. These ideas have led to speculation about time travel, as traveling near light speed or through strong gravitational fields might allow someone to experience time differently, potentially traveling into the future. While time travel remains theoretical to date, Einstein's theories lay the groundwork for such futuristic possibilities.



Though, no practical method for traveling through time has been discovered, however, there are several concepts from physics suggesting that time travel might be possible under these specific conditions:

1. **Special Relativity:** Einstein's theory of special relativity means that if you were traveling close to the speed of light, time would pass more slowly for you compared to someone who stays stationary. This is often called "time dilation" and has been confirmed experimentally (with atomic clocks on fast-moving planes; the Hafele-Keating Experiment, 1971). However, this does not allow for time travel to the past.

2. **General Relativity:** Einstein's theory of general relativity allows for the possibility of "closed time-like curves" (CTCs), which are paths through spacetime that could, *in theory*, loop back onto themselves. These could potentially allow travel to the past. Such curves might exist around extremely massive objects like black holes or in hypothetical exotic conditions (like wormholes). However, no empirical evidence suggests that CTCs exist or could be used for real human time travel.

3. **Wormholes:** Wormholes are theoretical passages through spacetime that could, *in principle*, connect distant points in both space and time. Some physicists speculate that if wormholes could be stabilized (perhaps with exotic forms of energy or matter), they **might** enable time travel. However, wormholes remain speculative and are not yet understood well enough to be considered a practical means of time travel.

4. **Quantum Mechanics:** There are some interpretations of quantum mechanics, such as the many-worlds hypothesis, that suggest the possibility of **parallel timelines** or **alternate realities**. This leads to speculation about the possibility of "time travel" within these alternate timelines. However, this idea is highly speculative and has no empirical support.



The interesting variable in all of this, is the seemingly interesting evidence from different photographs taken through the years. On the next page, this image was taken in 1941 at the grand re-opening ceremony for the South Fork Bridge in British Columbia, shows a fellow dressed in unusual attire. This photo has made its rounds on the internet and stumped many time-travel enthusiasts world-wide. Circled in red, is the man "from the future" wearing a screen-printed t-shirt and holding a "modern" camera. For the time-period, most men wore suits, slacks, and topped it off with a fedora or scally cap (flat cap). Is he from the future?

I hate to burst all the bubbles, this photo has sadly been debunked **sigh** — The glasses he's wearing were uncommon wrap-around sunglasses from 1944, but were around prior to '44. The shirt has the logo of a well known Canadian hockey team from that era; the Montreal Maroons (1940s), and the camera he's holding is a portable Kodak camera, one of several types of portable Kodak cameras that were made and sold since 1941. (Also, sidenote — a screen-printed t-shirt is never a give-away for things like this, because they were around in Womp, womp.



“Time Traveling Hipster,” 1941.

Or, how about one of the most well known time travel based movies — *Back to the Future, 1985*. By the year 2015 (according to the film) we should’ve had flying cars, **legitimate** hoverboards, dehydrated food that cooks within seconds, self-tying, -drying, and -fitting; shoes and jackets. While in part, some of those items will remain fictional until someone head-strong enough creates it. As years passed since the 1980s hit movie, we did get just a few of those notable items. Hoverboards — we got as close as we’re going to get to “personal hoverboards” — the one to

two wheeled death-traps that captivated nearly entire generations Z and Alpha.

In short, while time travel is a fascinating concept and theoretically possible under certain conditions (such as near-light-speed travel or through hypothetical wormholes), it is far from being achievable with current technology or understanding.



What *Back to the Future* said we would have in 2015 vs what we have 10 years (40 yrs since the films release in 1985)

Do we have it in 2025?	Yes	No
Hover Transportation	Yes, to an extent... companies have dawning some of their products with the name “hoverboard” without actually hovering, but...	Most hover-crafts are not available to general public (there are some impressive military-grade and what some folks have made in their backyards).
Drones (dog walking, delivery, etc.)	Yes! None of the dog-walking type I’m aware of yet, but definitely various types of drones, and delivery models.	
Mobile & Digital Payments	While mobile banking got its rise, so did the ability to pay for items on your mobile phone.	
Instant-Dry Clothing		No, not quite there yet. Although, Nike really did produce the self-lacing sneakers.
Bionic Implants	From bionic limbs to bionic eyes and ears. Technology has arrived.	
Motion-Controlled Devices	In 2006, we gained the Nintendo Wii.	
Virtual Reality Devices	These totally exist, and the tech made for them is improving/rapidly changing daily.	
Video Billboards	At the turn of the 21st century,	
AI Waitresses/Waiters	Scary, but yes. This is a thing, especially in the world of online ordering.	
Tablets	Yes, of all kinds! Small tablets with no screen made for writing/drawing; then Apple & Android tablets with screens.	
Video Calling	We’ve had this since the 1930s however, only in recent years was it a mode of communication carried in our pockets.	
Bluetooth Devices	Speakers, cars, phones, tablets, computers, headphones — you name it; everything is Bluetooth compatible these days, even crockpots!	
Thumbprint and Facial recognition software	This has been around since about the mid 90s and the tech has only improved since.	
Flat-Screens & Wall-Mounted TVs	This too has been around, however, since the late 80s. The tech has only improved since.	

*Happy
New Year*

2025

&

HAPPY

Birthday

TO YOU

1/9 — Ty

with Camp Ba Yo Ca

1/23 — Troyneisha

with Western Heights Baptist Center