

The People Loving People organization in Rogersville, which normally runs the Thanksgiving Dinner for the needy, recently had to cancel plans for this year's meal due to concerns over the COVID pandemic. Not wanting to completely leave the underserved empty handed on that day, People Loving People has gone in with the Americans Helping Americans organization, and in cooperation with Of One Accord, Second Harvest Food Bank and WCQR Radio, they will be providing 600 Thanksgiving food boxes to deserving applicants. Each box is expected to feed at least four people, which will mean up to 3600 individuals may be served.

"Mark and I decided since we were not going to be able to cook and provide the meal we normally do this year, that we would look around for other possible opportunities to do something. WCQR works with Second Harvest Food Bank to raise funds for Thanksgiving Food Boxes, so we contacted WCQR and made arrangements to donate funds for 600 boxes from our nonprofit People Loving People (Four Square, Inc.) organization and designate the 600 boxes for Hawkins County", said Dr. Blaine Jones, long time organizer of the Thanksgiving meal in Rogersville. "Our local food pantry, Of One Accord Ministries under the direction of Sheldon Livesay, works with Second Harvest Food Bank and they were able to arrange the pickup and distribution of the food boxes for us. Mr. Livesay had already acquired 300 food boxes from Americans Helping Americans, so altogether, there will be at least 900 Thanksgiving food boxes to apply for and distribute", Jones continued. "This is just another example of how God moves and works amongst his people", said Mark DeWitte who is the event co-organizer along with Jones. "We felt really bad not being able to do the usual Thanksgiving meal in Rogersville along with the Sullivan County Baptist Association Disaster Relief Kitchen, so we started thinking of other ways we could help folks out. Providing 900 or more boxes of food to deserving families will feed as many, if not more people than we normally feed" DeWitte continued.

Livesay and Of One Accord will handle the applications for the food and then later the distribution of the food boxes. Applications will be taken beginning on Friday, October 15<sup>th</sup> at Emergency Services in Church Hill located at 401 Richmond Street in the Church Hill Shopping Center. Applications will be taken on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays at that site. In Rogersville, at the Of One Accord building on East Main Street, applications will be taken beginning Friday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, Monday through Saturday from 10am to 5pm. Residents/applicants will fill out a simple application that will be numbered so a count can be maintained at all sites and so the total number of boxes are not over-promised. One box per family will be the limit as each box is anticipated to feed four people.

Distributions will take place all on Saturday, November 20<sup>th</sup>. Distribution will begin on that day at 9:00am at the Emergency Services office at 401 Richmond Street at the Church Hill Shopping Center. Distribution will begin at 9:30am at the Hancock County High School. Distribution will begin at Cherokee High School at 10:00am. Applicants will be advised of their pickup location and they will need to take their number and application tear-off slip to pick up their meal. "We are pleased to be able to participate in the Thanksgiving box distribution this year. We do Christmas food boxes every year, so everyone was so happy to hear that People Loving People was going to sponsor 600 food boxes for Hawkins County Thanksgiving dinners. That just means several thousand will get to eat a Thanksgiving Dinner again this year even though People Loving People was not

able to have their annual event” said Sheldon Livesay, Director of One Accord Ministries in Rogersville.

People Loving People is a branch of the nonprofit organization Four Square, Inc. founded by Jones and DeWitte over 12 years ago with the intent to better the community they live in by serving that community and serving God. “We are just excited we were able to come up with some way to get some deserving families fed over the Thanksgiving holiday” said DeWitte. “Our hopes and prayers are we will be back to cooking our usual meal in 2022” stated Jones. Boxes are expected to go fast, so please make plans to get signed up beginning October 15<sup>th</sup> at an application site near you.