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their service over the last two years. All shared a chicken dinner, and Executive Director Rodi Camodeca, who was brought in last July because of the volume of service Hope House is now providing, addressed the audience and presented volunteers with a small token of appreciation.

"We are thankful for our volunteers and for all the funds that are donated," Camodeca said. "Our ability to assist people has doubled over the last year and our operation is growing through all the hard work our volunteers contribute."

She ended her address by quoting Mother Teresa, "In every person I help, I see Jesus and I hope they see Jesus in me," and that is the goal of Hope House, to let others see and feel the love of Jesus through the help they receive from Hope House.

The funds for the dinner were provided personally by the Board, so donated funds would not be spent and could be saved to assist another household.

Hope House operates strictly within Union County as almost all the donated funds received are from local churches.

"Some private donors may live outside Union County but they, for one reason or another, have roots here and donate money to help the people in need here in our county. The money donated here stays here," explained Ueltzen.

Hope House helps on average more than 30 households a month. This is an example of how much need there is in Union County and what a great service they provide.

Two years ago, Hope House grew out of a need to be more responsible for the donated funds that people had entrusted to the local churches.

Each church had its own fund set aside to provide assistance for those in need but the money was just not getting to the folks that really needed it.

"Some people would stop at two or more churches in the same day and receive help from each one," Ueltzen said. "There was no way of



The Hope House Board of Directors, left to right, Evelyn Ueltzen, the Rev. Don Parmely, Katherine Nelson, Pat Baldwin, Rodi Camodeca, and the Rev. Frank Wilson. Photo/Joe Collins

knowing if they had already received help somewhere else or if it was their first stop.

"Also, there was no way of knowing how the money was really being spent," she said. "They may need it for the power, but use it for something else and not pay the power. The system was being taken advantage of and something had to be done. So many people were coming to the churches and we were running out of money and weren't able to help those who really needed it."

Enter Hope House. They collect the money that is being donated at different area churches, pool it all together and control the distribution of funds.

They work with area companies to assist in paying service and utility expenses and actually write many of the checks that go to those companies.

"Blue Ridge Mountain E.M.C. has been great to work with and have helped many people through the outreach of Hope House," praised Ueltzen.

Another helpful feature of Hope House is that all the funds and services available are centralized. The clients can find the help they need in one single location, which means they won't spend as much on gas going from church to church seeking assistance.

"It's much more efficient to operate this way and more people will receive help because the money is regulated," Ueltzen said. "Each applicant is interviewed and

then the need is verified before we commit financially to anyone. We want to make sure we don't waste any of the money we get because donations are hard to come by these days with the economy the way it is."

Jesus said in Matthew 25: 35-40, "I was hungry and you gave me meat; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or thirsty and gave you drink?"

"When saw we thee a stranger and took you in? or naked and clothed thee? or when saw we you sick and in prison and came to thee?"

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."

This is what Hope House is all about. Following the instructions of Jesus and helping strangers in need.

For more details about Hope House, visit the Web at [HopeHouse-UnionCounty.com](http://HopeHouse-UnionCounty.com) or on Facebook at Hope House of Union County.

You can also call them directly at (706) 781-3090.

"Please be in prayer for Hope House and the local people we are able to help," Ueltzen asked. "We need funds and volunteers so if anyone wants to do either please contact us and we will be able to assist you in mak-

ing donations or training you to work."

The Hope House of Union County is following the commands of Jesus and is growing fast and needs your help.

The people of this county have benefited by their assistance and will continue to do so as long as there is a need to be taken care of and the donations continue.

God Bless Hope House and all it does for the people of our county.

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with Amy Rogers and Eva Garmon of Union County Family Connection and Amy Rosser of Towns County Family Connection.

They realized that not every child has a warm coat to put on their back during the winter time.

"They are a great partner in helping us find the folks who are truly in need," Griggs said. "They really helped us in getting an understanding of how many kids don't have warm clothes to wear. We do whatever we can to make life a little better for some of the disadvantaged kids in our community."



The Knights of Columbus deliver coats to UCHS. Left to right: Jim O'Brien, Mitch Griggs, Eva Garmon, and Amy Rogers.

The Knights also partner with Blairsville Walmart to provide the winter clothing and Griggs had nothing but praise for the kind folks at Walmart.

"We have a great partnership with our friends over at Walmart," Griggs said. "Manager Tony Stewart has been very supportive of this and they've been a terrific partner and have allowed us to get more coats than we probably would have been able to afford. They play a key part and we really appreciate what they do to help us."

The Knights of Columbus is a world wide fraternal men's organization within the Catholic Church. It was founded by Father Michael McGivney in New Haven, CT in 1882, and named in honor of Christopher Columbus.

"It started to basically take care of widows and orphans. Over the years it has grown into a world wide organization and reaches out everywhere there is a Catholic Church," Griggs said. "We support many different charities and raise money for a number of different organizations. We provide all kinds of assistance to different programs for needy families in Union and Towns counties."

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