

January 2022

The Scope

Bigger Vision Of Athens Monthly Newsletter



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Bigger Vision Highlights:

On behalf of all of us at Bigger Vision, I wanted to wish everyone a happy new year! We are excited about the coming year, and I wanted to talk about what we have accomplished and our plans for the year ahead.

2021 was a challenging one for us here at Bigger Vision and due to the pandemic, we had to rethink the way we operated. We did much to adapt, including a reduced census, the elimination of close seating in the lower level, and not having dinner volunteers directly serving the food to guests. We also required at least one COVID-19 vaccination for all guests, and had all of the staff get fully vaccinated and tested regularly. This was primarily in response to the periods in which Bigger Vision had to temporarily close our doors for a week or two when a number of our staff and guests tested positive for the virus. To try and combat these obstacles, Bigger Vision's staff dedicated itself to increased cleaning/sanitizing efforts, regular mask use, social distancing requirements, and more.

As we move into 2022, we are looking to establish more structure and systems to address our needs, and some of this will be required as we implement some of the funding opportunities we have applied for. The addition of the new development position has enabled us to apply for a much greater number of potential opportunities, as well as communicate

better with our supporters so they know what we need and how they can help. When it comes to grants, as we are selected for opportunities, we need to gear up by working on our infrastructure. This would include developing clear policies and procedures for our activities. Another infrastructure priority involves the use of technology to help us better manage information and communicate. Other tasks include the need to establish proper oversight, implement quality assurance and improvement, and create more internal controls and compliance activities.

Our first major new project this year will involve providing showers and laundry facilities to residents of the newly funded county-sanctioned encampment, named "First Step". The camp is due to open in a matter of weeks, and we are talking with the other partners and making plans to do this right from the get-go.

We have big plans for 2022 that truly live up to our name – Bigger Vision. There are many needs in our community we hope to address. While Bigger Vision will always work to meet the basic needs of our guests, we want to continue providing new avenues for individuals experiencing homelessness to move along the road that leads to independence and a better life. To get there, we need to do a better job coordinating with other service providers, reaching out to our supporters, improving our effectiveness and efficiency, and expanding to meet service needs in our community.

To embark upon this ambitious plan, we will also need our supporters behind us like never before. We have done a tremendous amount of good so far, but there is much to be done, and we are ready, willing, and able to do it. We can't wait to see what 2022 has in store for Bigger Vision of Athens!

Steven J. Mason
Executive Director
Bigger Vision of Athens

Donor Spotlight of the Month:

To kick off the New Year, Bigger Vision would like to thank the wonderful volunteers that helped make Christmas such a special day for the guests and staff members that spent the holiday in the shelter with one another. This year, Bigger Vision was able to continue the tradition of allowing guests who spent the night on Christmas Eve the opportunity to stay at the shelter throughout Christmas Day. Guests were given the chance to relax inside during the day while being able to enjoy holiday music, movies, games, food, and more! To start the day off, guests were provided delicious homemade biscuits and juice from Pastor Wayne Douglas and the generous volunteers from *Wesley Chapel Community Church*. Guests ate breakfast while listening to classic Christmas tunes and enjoying one another's company at a safe distance.



Wesley Chapel Community Church
Ila, Georgia

After a relaxing morning and early afternoon, guests were treated to a wonderful lunch that was prepared by Theresa Walton, her amazing family, and parishioners from *Chestnut Grove Baptist Church*. Guests were able to enjoy turkey sandwiches, chips, fruit, cookies, and tasty hot cocoa while watching Christmas movies. Not only did this Mrs. Walton and the rest of her group feed all of the guests staying at the shelter, they also set up a table outside to continue feeding those in need. In addition, each guest was gifted essential items in a reusable tote bag that can be repurposed for a number of different uses by guests moving forward.



Volunteers from Chestnut
Grove Baptist Church



Gift bags for guests and others
experiencing homelessness in
ACC

Finally, guests were able to cap off an already wonderful holiday with a fantastic Christmas dinner provided by Renae Daniel and her family. The Daniel's have been wonderful supporters of Bigger Vision and our guests, and we're so grateful that they were able to provide dinner on such a special day. We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Wayne Douglas and *Wesley Chapel Community Church*, Theresa Walton and *Chestnut Grove Baptist Church*, and the Daniel family for helping make this one of the best Christmas' that our guests could have asked for! We can't wait to do it again next year!



The Daniel Family

New (Used) Vehicle Fund

We have exciting news to share! With help from supporters such as yourself, as well as a generous donation from *Heyward Allen Toyota*, Bigger Vision was able to purchase a new (used) 2014 Chevrolet Equinox for the shelter!



Bigger Vision will use this vehicle to accomplish a variety of necessary tasks to help ensure that the shelter is able to continue normal operations and provide quality service to our guests. Thank you to all of the donors and supporters that helped make this happen! Special thanks to **Steve Middlebrooks** from *Heyward Allen Toyota* for providing such a wonderful vehicle at a spectacular price!

Volunteer Opportunities:

Bigger Vision recently increased the number of available Evening Volunteer slots to three individuals! Both the Meal Provider and Evening Volunteer roles are still being performed with the same precautions that have been in place during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals that are interested in being an Evening Volunteer are encouraged to sign up early in advance, as openings fill up quickly once posted. Sign up to become a: **Meal Provider Volunteer**

- In a group or individually, plan & prepare, or purchase a meal for a minimum of 40 guests.
- Deliver & drop off the meal at Bigger Vision between 5:00-5:30pm.
- Usually, we would ask volunteers to serve the meal to the guests but due to COVID-19 we ask that they only drop off the meal.

OPEN JANUARY DATES FOR MEAL PROVIDER VOLUNTEER

JANUARY 5TH

JANUARY 8TH

JANUARY 14TH

JANUARY 18TH
JANUARY 19TH
JANUARY 25TH
JANUARY 27TH
JANUARY 28TH
JANUARY 31ST

Evening Volunteer

- Assisting staff with guest check-ins
- Assisting guests with minor issues
- Help facilitate smooth dinner process
- Build relationships with guests through conversations and games
- Provide encouragement and offer advice when requested

Questions?

Please don't hesitate to reach out for assistance! We are always available to help with the volunteer sign-up process. To contact us via email, please send your questions to fundraising.biggervision@gmail.com. To reach us by phone, dial the shelter number at 706-340-6062 and hit extension 3.

Learn More

Opportunities for Financial Donations:

Bed Sponsorship Program: While any donation is greatly appreciated, we have a goal of raising enough money to sponsor all of the beds for the guests of our overnight stay program. One night's stay includes two meals, a shower/laundry, and any basic necessities a guest may need. Please email Director@BiggerVisionOfAthens.org or go to our website if you are interested in donating to one of our three commitment tiers:

BRONZE LEVEL



**Bronze Bed Sponsorship:
\$20/Monthly Commitment**

Contributions are recognized with:
Standard magnet with chosen name on bed & recognition on the Bigger Vision of Athens website & social media

1 bed for 1 night each month

SILVER LEVEL



**Silver Bed Sponsorship:
\$250/Monthly Commitment**

Contributions are recognized with:
Custom magnet with chosen name, a photo op with you/your group, & recognition on the Bigger Vision of Athens website & social

GOLD LEVEL



**Gold Bed Sponsorship:
\$500/Monthly Commitment**

Contributions are recognized with:
Stand-alone custom magnet with chosen name & logo on bed, a photo-op with you/your group, & recognition on the Bigger Vision of Athens

PayPal – Using PayPal, you will be able to contribute as a one time donation, or as a monthly contribution to the Bed Sponsorship program through the link on our [website](#).

NOTE: You **DO NOT** need to create a PayPal account to complete a one time donation through this platform.

Check – If your check represents a Bed Sponsorship, please indicate so in the memo line. Either drop them off in-person M-F between 9am-4pm, or mail it to:

The Bigger Vision of Athens, Inc.,
P.O. Box 8022, Athens, GA 30603

Venmo – We have exciting news! Bigger Vision of Athens has recently acquired a Venmo account. If you are interested in donating to Bigger Vision through this service, you can find our organization by searching **@biggervisionofathens** or scanning the QR code provided.



venmo

Other Opportunities: If the bed sponsorship program isn't right for you, we appreciate one-time donations as well through the avenues listed above. In addition, we provide the option for you to donate while also shopping online or for your groceries:

Amazon Smile – When using [Smile.Amazon.com](#) (instead of Amazon.com), a percentage of every purchase you make will be donated to Bigger Vision of Athens if you select our organization.

Kroger Plus – Activate [Kroger Community Rewards](#) to donate a percentage of every purchase you make using your Kroger Plus card to BVOA if you select our organization.

Creative Ways to Donate: Here are some fun ways to get your network involved in your support of Bigger Vision!



New Year, New You!
 Celebrate the new year by going through old clothing and donating gently used items to our guests here at Bigger Vision!



A Dollar A Day
 Help support guests here at Bigger Vision by saving a dollar (or more!) each day, then donating the total amount at the end of the year!



Become a Meal Provider!
 Do you *love* to cook? Sign up to be a Meal Provider this month and help us feed up to 40 individuals in need in a single night!

Opportunities for Item Donations:

Amazon Registry: Our supply of items fluctuates, so we keep a list of items we currently need on [Amazon](#).

Walmart Registry for Good – Visit our [Walmart](#) registry to see more items the shelter is in need of, including gift cards that can be used for future purchases!

This month's **highest** needs:

- **HAND WARMERS**
- Earbuds
- Disposable Gloves
- Wet Wipes
- Cough Drops
- **NEW Men's/Women's Underwear**
- Assorted Healthy Snacks
 - Sugar-free for diabetic guests
- Disposable Water Bottles

COVID-19 Shelter Updates:

Beginning August 15th, Bigger Vision began requiring guests to show proof of vaccination before being given access to services, including laundry, shower, and shelter services. Guests that do not have proof of vaccination are still able to ring the doorbell to inquire about basic necessities, but they are asked to put on a mask before conversing with staff members. Guests that are not vaccinated but are interested in doing so can be given assistance in locating the nearest vaccination site. Upon careful consideration of the positive outcomes we have seen regarding the number of guests who have chosen to be vaccinated, Bigger Vision increased the number of available beds from 24 to 30 on September 9th, 2021. Up to ten guests at a time are now permitted to use the common space for games and other recreational activities so long as proper distancing can still occur.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, we modified our services to better serve those experiencing homelessness in our community including:

- In line with the most recent CDC approved COVID-19 protocol regarding emergency shelters, we have capped our bed capacity at 30 (a reduction from our usual 34 guests, but up from the 24 we've been able to serve) to allow for appropriate safety measures to take

Words from the Director

"We have big plans for 2022 that truly live up to our name – Bigger Vision. There are many needs in our community we hope to address."

Steven Mason
Executive Director

Upcoming Events

Make sure to follow Bigger Vision of Athens on [Facebook](#) to stay up to date on any future events!



- place.
- Offering a limited number of to-go dinners each day.
- Offering afternoon showers & laundry from 1:00pm to 4:00pm Thursday-Sunday by appointment.
- Guests are having their temperature checked, are asked to sanitize their hands & are required to wear a mask.
- In the case of exposure to the virus, we will close the shelter until we deem it safe to return.

FAQ:

What volunteer roles are Bigger Vision currently most in need of?

- Moving into the new year, one of the goals that Bigger Vision would like to achieve is scheduling recurring Meal Providers for each day of the month (e.g., the third Thursday of each month). There are many openings available in the months ahead, so if you're interested in helping feed individuals experiencing homelessness in your community please sign up today!

Has Bigger Vision made any recent changes to COVID-19 protocols?

- No, Bigger Vision has not made any significant changes in COVID-19 protocol since the onset of the Omicron variant. Staff, volunteers, and guests continue to operate cautiously with respect to one another's health and personal safety.

What roles will Bigger Vision be playing regarding the new county sanctioned encampment?

- Presently, Bigger Vision is scheduled to provide showers and laundry to the residents of the camp from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM each day. As part of this arrangement, Bigger Vision will be providing the soap and detergent, as well as water for residents who are waiting to bathe or begin laundry. "First Step" will be responsible for scheduling and transporting camp residents to and from Bigger Vision as needed.

Connect with us

Bigger Vision of Athens, Inc. | 706-340-6062 | [Volunteer](#) | [Website](#)

