

# Agape Network

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## First Annual Agape Ascend Award held in Washington, D.C.

*Bipartisan Congressional Co-Chairs Host reception at the Florida House*

Washington D.C., July 21, 2021 - On this evening set at the glorious Florida House, the first event held on site since the onset of the pandemic, an esteemed group of bipartisan members of Congress hosted the first annual Agape Ascend Award reception. The list of co-hosts included both Florida Senators Marco Rubio (R) and Rick Scott (R), along with U.S. Representatives Frederica S. Wilson (D-FL 24th District), Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D-FL 23rd District), Maria Elvira Salazar (R-FL 27th District), Lois Frankel (D-FL 21st District), Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL 25th District), Ted Deutch (D-FL 22nd District), and Carlos Gimenez (R-FL 26th District).

Vicki Lopez, a consultant for Agape, spoke about Agape's life-saving work directed towards women and children. She introduced Maureen Lewis, this year's recipient of the first Agape Ascend Award, who is a graduate of Agape, having successfully completed the program in 2006. Since then, she has worked at Agape as the Peer Specialist, lending her personal experience with the residents during residential treatment and thereafter. She is the proud mother of Blessing, who was born while she was in treatment. She has also adopted a daughter, Tiana, whom she first fostered and is currently fostering other children. She purchased her first home in 2018 through the assistance of Agape. "Maureen is an exemplary graduate who now gives voice to her story and those of the women she serves in order to increase Agape's visibility and its capacity", said Lopez. The guests were locked into Maureen's gripping testimony of what her life was like as she struggled with drug addiction and homelessness. She attributes her sobriety and being alive to the Agape program and in her faith in God.

Board members Joseph and Alexandra Milton were also in attendance and provided the status of the building expansion currently under construction. They also announced a personal monetary gift to Agape. The evening went on with guests pouring over renderings of the new Agape Village project and drone photos of the site, as staffers and other guests flowed through and collegially enjoyed a night of

interaction and overall joy.

Agape Network is a non-profit, non-denominational faith-based 501(c)(3) organization. It specializes in a comprehensive, integrated healthcare system that addresses the multifaceted health issues experienced by individuals and families today

Located in Miami-Dade County, Agape Network, Inc. is a fully integrated, nationally accredited community health center and treatment facility providing residential and outpatient services throughout the county. For over 30 years, Agape has been a model for private and public partnerships with local, state and federal governments, managed medical assistance health plans (MMA), provider service networks (PSM), healthcare institutions, and criminal justice jail diversion programs. These partnerships have helped Agape achieve the combined missions of private, government, and grassroots community organizations.

With highly experienced care teams of more than 150 staff members, Agape is uniquely qualified to serve people with complex behavioral and physical healthcare needs.

Agape's culture of innovation is driven by evidence-based practices and data to continuously improve and deliver high-quality, value based conscious care with outcomes that demonstrate its ability to change lives by restoring individuals and families to psychological, social, physical, and spiritual health.

In response to the growing behavioral health and housing needs of the South Florida community, Agape began construction in 2020 on a \$15M capital expansion for the Agape Village Health Center, a national model of integrated care, which will increase its capacity from 1,000 to 2,500 outpatient clients receiving weekly services.

Residential inpatient capacity will be increased from 62-beds to 141-beds. The Health Center includes a clinic and wellness medical center, which will provide primary and behavioral healthcare to its clients. It also includes an educational and vocational center that will assist the residents with job training and life skills and will offer a culinary arts certification program. It will provide supportive housing to clients transitioning from residential treatment where mothers and their children can live from nine months to one year. A preschool/early childhood education/daycare center will serve the children living at the Health Center and ensure that they are prepared to succeed when they enroll in school.

Agape relies upon a variety of funding sources including individual donors; corporations; foundations; local, state, and federal governments; and fundraising events. To make a contribution, please contact Vicki Lopez at [vllconsulting@icloud.com](mailto:vllconsulting@icloud.com) or (305) 216-7794. To learn more about Agape, please contact Claudio Perez at [cperez@agapenet.org](mailto:cperez@agapenet.org) or (305) 694-4040.

For more information visit the website: [www.theagapenetwork.org](http://www.theagapenetwork.org).  
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