**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry (“Outreach”) has begun to take applications for the sixth annual Garden of Hope Program.

This program, sponsored jointly by Western Carolina Community Action and Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry offers low-income families the opportunity to purchase needed tools, seeds and fertilizer for a successful vegetable garden. It also gives families the opportunity to learn a new skill, build family ties and develop a network of community relationships by pairing participants with experienced garden mentors from the community.

“Participation in Outreach’s Garden of Hope program is encouraged and welcomed,” said Michelle Reedy, Outreach’s Client Service Manager, “Outreach is looking for individuals and families who would like to serve as garden mentors to teach a gardener the skills to create a productive garden with a variety of crops. We are also looking for sponsors who would be willing to contribute $45 to help participants invest in garden tools, seeds and other supplies.”

“Whether you sponsor a gardener with a financial contribution or become a garden mentor, you will receive invitations to a cooking class in June and to the annual Harvest Celebration in mid-August,” said Reedy, “The cooking class will focus on preparing fresh in-season produce and the Harvest Celebration is a fun and festive pot-luck dinner that includes food, blue ribbon competitions, games, prizes and more.”

If you are interested in any part of this program, please contact Michelle Reedy at (828) 894-2988. Outreach is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1991. The organization's mission is to provide compassionate assistance to Polk County residents who are unable to provide for their basic life needs. For more information on Outreach, please visit www.tboutreach.org.