

Great Opportunities Available for Volunteering, by Tina Reid, Volunteer Coordinator

Helping those in need at Interfaith most often starts in our Intake Office filling out an application. Once that application is filled out, it is then processed by volunteers. Right now, this is the area that we have our greatest need for volunteers. It takes a minimum of 4 volunteers each shift to cover this vital area. With 2 shifts a day, 5 times a week, that is a minimum of 40 people a week! We are very fortunate to have folks that volunteer regularly in this department, and some come in to help us even more than once a week. Unfortunately, many of our volunteers are away for the summer or have had circumstances come up that keep them from volunteering for a while.

Therefore, I'm asking our wonderful community to help me fill some of these positions. It only takes a 3 hour a week commitment. There are 3 positions in the office to choose from. We can guarantee you are right for one of them!

And, if helping people in need wasn't enough incentive, how about working along side other volunteers that are simply amazing? So many of our volunteers build lasting friendships with their fellow co-workers, that become like a family. Karen, one of our Intake Volunteers, recently told me, "I signed up to help a few hours a week, but I was surprised that it ended up helping me even more. I get so much out of helping the sweet people that come for assistance, and I get even more from the friendships I've discovered here. It's really an amazing opportunity"

For information about how you can be on the front lines helping clients in need, please call me to take a tour and find your perfect spot at Interfaith. You're only a phone call away!

*To reach Tina, call (352) 629-8868 x210, or email Tina.Reid@IESmarion.org.
Volunteer Applications can also be found on our website at www.IESmarion.org.*



Della, Lin, Bill and Linda volunteer together on Tuesday afternoons

A Donor's Birthday Becomes A Gift to Interfaith, by Kayla Grimsley, Finance Manager

All of our donors are special, but every now and then you have one whose personality stands out. I have officially been in the Finance Manager position for a year now and I was reminded of that when a donor came in to drop off a check recently.

Someone wanting to drop off a check/donation to Interfaith isn't out of the norm, but for this donor, it was her birthday! When I walked to the front office to greet the waiting donor, I realized that I met her last year. Sara makes a special trip to us every year on her birthday to make a donation and she has such a spirit of joy and thankfulness surrounding her.

It personally made me think about a change of heart on how I spend my time on my birthday. In my mind, it's about the only day a year where you can be selfish and accept gifts and get celebrated - yet in this donor's mind, it's the day she can give back. Wow! I look forward to seeing Sara again next year as I'm reminded of another year completed in my position.

We love seeing the faces of those who donate to Interfaith, but there are also ways to donate through the mail, over the phone, or even online. Please contact me if you need help with making a donation in the future or even stop by on your birthday!

Please Donate Today:
Mail: PO Box 992, Ocala FL 34478
Online: www.IESmarion.org
By Phone: (352) 629-8868 x202

From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley



We often walk right past suffering and don't even realize it. I cross paths with homeless people almost daily and there are still things I am learning about their suffering. One recent incident inspired me to hold a walk to raise our awareness. As I was coming into work early one morning I could see a figure coming out of a wooded area and this person was limping. As the image came into view I realized it was Robert, one of the homeless that we help here at Interfaith on a regular basis. You see Robert is a middle aged man who is mentally handicapped. He speaks with a severe speech impediment and is sometimes difficult to understand, but his "child-likeness" makes him very endearing to us. Because of his condition he is a regular target on the streets and is often taken advantage of. For his disability he gets

assistance from the government which comes on a debit card. Each month the government replenishes the balance on his card so that he can use it to purchase basic necessities. Too often, he shows up at our door with black eyes and scrapes from being beaten up for his card. People will hurt him until he gives up his card and passcode and then take his money. He comes to us because the staff at Interfaith will help him apply for a replacement card.

So on the morning I saw Robert limping, my worst fear was that he had again been beaten. So I asked him and his answer surprised me. As he sat on the picnic bench under our big oak tree, he pointed down to his feet and said, "it's my shoes, they hurt my feet." As I looked down I realized that he was wearing shoes that were too small.

And for the first time it dawned on me that when the homeless come to us for shoes, there is no guarantee that we'll have their size. The shoes we offer them are whatever was donated to us from the community and we rarely get mens shoes, so for them, the selection is even slimmer. And then I thought about the fact that this man has no transportation and has to walk everywhere he goes. My mind immediately went to all of those I see walking every day in shoes that may not fit and the discomfort they must endure. Then came the humbling realization that I am so fortunate to have comfortable shoes that fit. It's so easy to take even the smallest things for granted. And sweet Robert would have never complained had I not asked him why he was limping.

So in honor of all of those who silently suffer every day with sore feet, or blisters, or heat exhaustion and dehydration from the Florida heat, we are going to have an awareness walk. This event is called "**Walk a Mile in My Shoes**" and will be a fund-raising event for our homeless shelter. Those who agree to participate will be asked to raise \$250 or more in sponsorships (that's only 10 sponsors for \$25 each) and when they arrive they will be asked to take off their comfortable shoes and select from the shoes we have available for them to wear as they walk the mile. We'll also give them a shopping bag to put their good shoes in just like many of our homeless use to carry all of their worldly possessions. The walk will begin at the parking lot of the Ivy House Restaurant and Brick City Church and will end at the Interfaith Center for Life approximately 1 mile down Silver Springs Blvd. The walk is the morning of August 26th and more information can be found on Facebook and at www.IESmarion.org.

If we can get 100 people to walk with us we can raise \$25,000 to house homeless women and children. As an added benefit, maybe people will remember to donate their comfortable gently worn shoes to a local charity that will share them with those less fortunate. And for those of you that might remember from another recent article, Robert was able to get a better pair of shoes that day, thanks to one of our awesome donors.

So I would ask that you please consider walking, but if you are unable to, please pray for this event to fulfill its purpose.

That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. Philippians 3:10

Charlie's Garden Project

When Interfaith purchased the Women's Center there was a vision cast to create a serenity garden that would be used to memorialize babies lost prior to birth. In partnership with the Women's Pregnancy Center's post-abortion counseling program we wanted to provide a space where people could memorialize their unborn children by name. Additionally, we want to provide this space for those who have lost babies due to natural causes but were unable to afford a memorial. This sacred space is Charlie's Garden and will be created on the north end of our Center for Life building. God has been so gracious to send us some champions to help, with members from the Villages First Baptist and a young man working on his Eagle Scout status. Also of great help to this project is our Board Member and Landscape Architect, Cindy MacKay. But there is always room for more helpers! If this project interests you, please contact Karla at 629-8868 ext. 219 and she will invite you to the next planning meeting! We hope to have a dedication of the completed garden in the Fall. Stay tuned!

Special Gifts

In MEMORY of:

Harry and Evelyn Dannels

By: Lois Dannels

Eugene and Helen Layerd

By: Lori Hunter

Russell Sands

By: Gayle P Elkes

Josephine Foster

Donna Curry

By: Terry and Cindy Crawford

In HONOR of:

Wilma Andrews

By: Cindy Andrews

For information on memorial and honorary donations, contact Kayla at 629-8868x202 or kayla.grimsley@iesmarion.org. Mail: PO Box 992, Ocala, FL 34478.



Make sure you check out the Facebook page for Interfaith to stay connected to our most current needs, events and praises to the community.

Center for Life Needs Drivers

At the Center for Life, we are striving to fulfill the calling of Jesus to meet each other's basic human needs – which includes caring for the sick (Matt.25:24-40). Each client who comes to us for services matters and we hope to make them know it! If you are interested in helping, one immediate answer would be to consider being a volunteer driver. We have an urgent need for volunteer drivers willing to drive clients to medically-necessary locations such as the pharmacy or other health-related appointments. Our clients often have to walk to these locations in the summer heat – regardless of injury or health condition. A short drive from the Center for Life to Bitting's Pharmacy, for instance, would be an answered prayer for someone trying to make the trek with a sprained ankle or a cardiac condition. Interested in helping? Please stop by and see us at the Center for Life or contact me with any questions! God bless you!

By: Brandy Forman-Kraft, CFL Manager, (352) 629-8868 Ext.204

Our Thanks!

Let's give a shout out to the team at Signature Brands for this awesome donation of baby supplies! We appreciate your support more than words can say! *Pictured below.*



Thank you to the many donors that have donated clothing to Interfaith recently. Our little free Clothing Boutique was sadly lacking until we received a huge influx of clothing! We are still needing mens clothing and shoes, so keep cleaning out those closets!



Ernie and Carol Brandes from the Corvette Club presented Food 4 Kids with a check for \$300.00 to cover the cost of backpacks for Harbour View School. They have been buying the backpacks for Harbour View for over 10 years. We're blessed to have such a generous organization and one that packs and delivers the bags each week to Harbour View. *Ernie is pictured above with Food 4 Kids Manager, Karen Fant.*

Client Gets Blessing from Another Client, By Sonya Tyler, Director of Operations

When groceries are offered to our clients for emergency assistance, our volunteers meet with them one on one to make sure we're meeting their needs properly. Sometimes that means asking embarrassing questions, like "Do you have a microwave, stove and refrigerator?" and "Are you driving a vehicle or walking today?" See, these questions help our volunteers to know how to pack groceries for clients. Tom, one of our homeless friends, lives in a camp not far from here, but he won't be able to carry as many groceries as Sarah, who drives her own vehicle with her two little ones in tow. And likewise, someone living in a homeless camp won't be able to keep things like butter and milk cold, so we try to provide powdered milk when we can, or MREs that are often donated to us. Some clients may be celiac and cannot have gluten, so we try to accommodate that when we can, and many are diabetic, so lots of sugary items won't be what they need.

Recently, I overheard a conversation with one of our volunteers and a client, that melted my heart. A young man was at the Warehouse to pick up his food, and his transportation was in his hands. You see, he rode a skateboard to Interfaith, so he could get formula and diapers for his new wife. The volunteer was hesitant to give him too much food because she knew he couldn't carry much. Luckily, one of our other clients who had driven that day, overheard the conversation, and offered to take the young man home. I still remember the look of relief on his face. You see, on top of him using a skateboard, it was also pouring down rain outside. When the young man left, gratefully loaded up with several bags of food and diapers, I think our volunteers were just as happy as he was. All I know is that God used His people that raining afternoon to bring about a little happiness.



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Check out our website at
www.IESmarion.org



MISSION STATEMENT

Interfaith Emergency Services is a community of faith called by God to offer emergency assistance without judgment to all persons in Marion County.

Partnerships Make the Difference, by Karla Grimsley, CEO

Often in the community I hear people say that none of the social services know what the others are doing. While that is true to some degree, Interfaith enjoys a close working relationship with many other agencies. We partner with Salvation Army to ensure we are best utilizing the limited beds in our shelters. We make referrals to the local domestic violence shelter when they can better serve our client. We participate in the Charity Tracker program, a shared database which allows us to see where and when clients have received services, to avoid duplication. We have staff representation at a Continuum of Care meeting that brings social services providers together monthly, as well as working with the local Homeless Council as they assist our residents with deposits to help them get reestablished into their own homes. Brother's Keeper and Interfaith share food and space to ensure that people are being fed whether they need a hot cooked meal or groceries to take back home. We also work with the school board's liaison for homeless children whenever they have needs. It's also not uncommon for agencies to share their donations with other agencies when there is a surplus.

Through the Center for Life we partner with Hope Clinic to provide free medical services, FreeDOM Clinic to provide free dental, and Ignite to provide mental health counseling. We participate in a newly established Free Clinic Consortium to coordinate services and resources between the various health service agencies that have been established. Many of the other clinics partner with Interfaith to provide assistance to their patients in purchasing their prescribed medications.

The list could go on and on. The point is, that we live in a wonderful community of people who do charitable work in unity because they truly care about this community and its' residents. Interfaith is just blessed to be a part of the good work that is happening for the sake of those less fortunate and we appreciate our partners more than words can say!