

## Walk a Mile in My Shoes, by Michelle Collier, Shelter Resident Assistant

I am sure you have heard the term “Walk a mile in my shoes.” Well, have you ever thought of how it would be to actually walk a mile in another person’s shoes? CEO Karla Grimsley and her team at Interfaith put the term to the test on September 1st and hosted an event to raise awareness for the homeless in our community.

The walk began at the Brick City Church on E. Silver Springs Blvd. and ended at the Interfaith Center for Life clinic at 108 N Pine. The idea behind the event was for participants to recruit sponsors to collect at least \$250 donations from friends and families to support them in their mile walk. At the event, walkers would wear one of the donated pair of shoes stretched along the sidewalk, just as our homeless do. For many, their size wasn’t available or the shoes didn’t fit correctly, which is a typical experience for our homeless. For them, they are happy to put anything on their feet. They don’t have the luxury of buying the correct shoe that fits their needs.

*“I had no idea the suffering they felt. It changed my view completely,” (walk participant).*

Karen, one of the walkers said, “We are so blessed with a closet full of perfectly good shoes. I never thought about the homeless person that spends their days wondering the streets in one, ill-fitted pair of shoes.” Dottie Rathel, another walker posted on her blog the 10 things she learned from the event. My favorite was “Shoes tell a story, sometimes a painful one.”



Staff Members Michelle, Sam and Dawn

Working at the shelter, I see many of our residents and our ‘homies’ that come to the soup kitchen each day for food, that struggle daily for the simplest things we take for granted. It is heart-breaking. And even though we have a free Clothing Boutique that includes shoes for men and women, we don’t always have a great selection.

This year at the Walk a Mile in My Shoes event we were able to raise \$13,021, which will go towards our homeless shelter ministry here at Interfaith. We are so grateful to all that came out to support our event! Also we would like to thank our lead sponsor, Zone Health and Fitness, and our co-sponsors Face of the Day Salon & Spa and Cox Communications. A special thank you to Brick City Church for allowing us to use their facilities.

Finally, we are grateful for each of the walkers and participants and all the staff, volunteers and our residents that participated and helped make the event such a success!!



Residents at Walk

## Have a Few Hours to Spare? by Tina Reid, Volunteer Coordinator

We are quickly approaching our busiest time of the year. We are looking forward to it for sure. With all that busyness comes a bigger need for volunteers that are willing to help on a regular basis. One day a week for three hours a day makes a big difference to those in need. There are many positions to fill - from clothes sorters to prayer partners. Please contact me if you are able to join our family of volunteers at Tina.Reid@IESmarion.org or online at www.IESmarion.org.

## From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley

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For those of you who are not aware, homelessness has become a national crisis. It used to be something that was prevalent in big cities and most affected were single adult men. Now it's single women, single moms and dads with children in tow, or entire families including a mom, dad and children. Most of the homeless that we assist here at Interfaith are those who are experiencing financial difficulties. Of course, along with poverty comes health issues and sometimes substance abuse issues, but the people that come into our shelter can get those issues addressed as part of their case-plan. However, there is a segment of our society that doesn't receive any help. That is those who are suffering from severe mental illness or those who are intellectually challenged. They very well may receive a check from our social security administration because they are indeed handicapped, but what happens when you give someone a check when they are incapable of managing money or other normal adult tasks? They stay lost, homeless and vulnerable. And because they have a very difficult time trusting people, it takes time and cultivation of a relationship before they will allow you to help. This is why I believe an engagement center for those chronically homeless would be beneficial. It would be a place where they feel safe and accepted, but also a place where they can let someone know of their needs. There is a ministry that is already doing this well, called Wear Gloves. If you haven't checked them out you should. They build relationships with the homeless and offer them opportunities to be productive. This is a wonderful ministry for those who don't fall into that category of severe mental illness or mentally challenged. The target population I'm talking about is probably the most difficult to help. While those of us working in this arena know they are there, most of us don't feel qualified to help them. But how long can we just throw our hands in the air and say it's hopeless? There must be a solution. I'm very grateful to those who volunteer to be a part of the Public Policy Institute to address some of our local issues. Their current study is on the homeless. I have a strong feeling that when great minds come together a solution, or at least a start to a solution, can be found. Please keep those volunteers as well as those in our city and county leadership in your prayers as they also have to address these difficult problems in our county. We've had so many things happen in the past two years here at Interfaith and across the county, that in the past looked hopeless (such as free dental care). So I feel more hopeful than ever that we can overcome this issue and make a better way for those who aren't capable of doing so for themselves. If God has taught me anything since my time at Interfaith, it's to never say never. With God all things are possible.

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."  
Mathew 19:26

## Donor Rescues Stranded Blind Man, by Jessica Rodriguez, Director of Ministries

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On a hot summer day, I met a young man named Steven. He had walked to Interfaith from The Villages. Luckily he received a ride from a stranger for the last two miles of his journey, who told him about Interfaith. Steven had flip flops on that were 2 sizes too big, his clothing was dirty, and all he had with him was a bookbag and a wooden stick.

Steven is legally blind. He has no vision in one eye and can barely see things up close with his other eye. He came to us because 3 weeks before, Steven was living in Indiana and he received a call from the hospital that his mother was about to pass away. He borrowed money from a friend and came down to The Villages on the bus. Within a few hours of his arrival his mother passed. He found out from the landlord his mother was behind on her rent and she had no money. The landlord let him stay for a couple of weeks while he sorted out her affairs.

After hearing his story, the funeral home charged the bare minimum to cremate his mother, which was all the money he had. Her ashes were in a wooden container in his back pack. He had no money to get back to Indiana and he was going to walk or hitch hike back home.

Whoever picked him up brought him to our door because they knew he needed help. God works in mysterious ways. He is always on time and knows what he is doing. A couple of weeks before we received a donation to help pay specifically for bus tickets, which is not something we regularly do. With that donation, Interfaith was able to pay for Steven to get back to Indiana with his mother's ashes. We also gave Steven food for his journey, shoes, socks, a change of clothes and most importantly - prayer.

It was truly heaven sent that a blind man would find his way walking to Interfaith. I was grateful to meet Steven and I was so humbled that we were able to help him. When I think of all the people we help and the people I have met, he will always hold a special place in my heart. I am so grateful for the donors that provide so generously, never knowing who their donation will reach or how it can touch someone's life.

## Special Gifts

### In MEMORY of:

Bobby Mathews

By: Ann and Bobby Richardson  
Terry and Cindy Crawford  
M L and W R Elliott, III  
Duke and Becky Hagood

Richard Senko

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By: Ben and Helen Hayes

Angie Keuntjes

By: Traci Elliott Heinrich

Duke and Becky Hagood

### In HONOR of:

Bob Leighty

By: Roger and Marilyn Laible

Renee and Ben Goldman's

60th Anniversary

By: Roberta Scott

Eva Litt

Karen Kuperberg

## A Special Gift

Give a gift - an honorary or memorial donation in their name to Interfaith! The person honored (or their family) will receive a letter of acknowledgement. Email: [Kayla.Grimsley@IESmarion.org](mailto:Kayla.Grimsley@IESmarion.org). Mail donations to PO Box 992, Ocala, FL 34478 or visit our website: [www.IESmarion.org](http://www.IESmarion.org).

## Many Thanks to...

Thanks to American Fire and Safety for donating their time and resources to Interfaith!

Special shout out to the following folks for their recent collections: First Christian Church VBS 100 pounds food and school supplies; Institute New Awareness (Richard Johnson): 72 boxes Macaroni & Cheese; and Countryside Presbyterian: 16 bedmats with fleece blanket inside.

Thanks to the students at Eighth Street Elementary for donating 680 lbs of food! (pictured right)



## The Thrift Store Needs You! by Shannon Pickering, Manager

In an effort to improve our Thrift Store, we have put a lot of time and effort into creating a great training system for sorting and pricing items, so we can put out the best items we can for sale, at reasonable prices. Considering the volume of items that are donated, we literally need dozens of volunteers each week to help us keep up with cleaning, fixing, sorting and pricing. That is where you come in! We need your help! Volunteering with Interfaith just requires 3 hours, one day a week (unless you want to do more of course). Our friendly staff and volunteers at the store are happy to train and stand alongside you, as you help create a shopping nirvana for Ocala. Our goal is to have the cleanest and best stocked store in town. Can you commit to helping us? And, for anyone over 18 years old, we can also provide community service hours for those that volunteer. Please call our Volunteer Coordinator Tina at (352) 629-8868 x210 for more information. And if you haven't been to our Thrift Store yet - come check us out at 718 N Pine, Ocala.

## Food 4 Kids Praises Local Partners by Karen Fant, Food 4 Kids Manager



### Sonya, Daphne & Karen at Chick-Fil-A in July

County that didn't have enough food and felt like he had to do something. So he got involved with feeding the children of Marion County. We are thankful that his wife has carried on this legacy because it helps so many students. Thank you Donna and St. Paul's Church.

We are proud to be partners with Chick-Fil-A and the JOY FM, who have been hosting a food drive the last several years to benefit the Food 4 Kids backpack program. Even in the bad weather, our dedicated community still managed to donate 2,783 pounds of food as well as \$311.00 to purchase food. A host of volunteers, as well as the fantastic team at Chick-Fil-A, battled the pouring rain to get the donations, including Sharon Cummings who got totally soaked bringing in donations (pictured right). Thanks again Chick-Fil-A, JOY FM and all the volunteers for such a successful event. You are the best!



Sharon at Chick Fil A

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Check out our website at  
**[www.IESmarion.org](http://www.IESmarion.org)**



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**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.*

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**Donor Provides Vehicle as Answered Prayer**

Viola Thomas is truly a woman of God. She volunteers as a Chaplain in our Prayer Room a few times a week. She recently experienced some bad luck through an automobile accident and her car was totaled. And although she suffered injuries herself, she continued to arrive to volunteer using public transportation. Viola didn't want to miss the opportunity to comfort our clients that are in need of spiritual prayer and support.

When she told us of her accident, the staff and I prayed that God would help her find a vehicle, as she could not afford to replace the one that was



totaled. Within a couple weeks, one of Interfaith's donors called and said her husband had a Chevy pickup and they wanted it donated to someone in need. We were so happy to pass along this blessing to Viola – an answered prayer for such a faithful servant of God. God answered our prayers in a big way – and Viola is living proof.

***Pastor Bill Bender, Prayer Team***

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**Hygiene Bags are Awesome**

Special thanks to the Ocala Elks Lodge for the 20 travel hygiene bags that were delivered from Amazon this week. These



amazing bags include our most needed hygiene items that we provide to our homeless. Unique to men and women needs– each contains shampoo, razor, deodorant, comb, toothbrush and paste, and much more!

If you would like to order these on Amazon, make sure you use [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) and select Interfaith as your charity of choice and it's a double blessing, as we receive .05% of your Amazon shopping proceeds -every time you shop!