

## Celebrating Volunteers that Bring Life-Change Every Day! by Tina Reid

We are so grateful for each and every one of our volunteers. We have 221 that volunteer at least once a week and 65 that volunteer once a month. If it wasn't for the 221, we would not be able to provide services to those in need every weekday, feed the hungry children of Marion County at the end of every week that school is in session, put on Bible studies and other self-enrichment classes for our shelter residents or run a Thrift Store that provides funding for medicine for those that cannot afford it. If it wasn't for the 65 we wouldn't be able to have morning devotions for our shelter residents every weekday or provide a hot meal to them every day of the month. We already have 14 new volunteers as of the end of February! If you have ever contemplated volunteering, please reach out to me! With all these volunteers you wouldn't know, but we are shorthanded in the Food Pantry, Thrift Store, Center for Life and the Free Clothing Boutique. I hope you enjoy this month's articles as we highlight a few of our volunteer-force that allow us to help our community like we do. This is our favorite time of year because April holds the best week of the year, National Volunteer Appreciation Week! We love celebrating our volunteers!

### "It's About Helping People," Gabe, Warehouse Volunteer

My name is Gabrielle (aka Gabe). I've volunteered at the food pantry for about 3 years, ever since we moved here from Phoenix. In my time here I have found Interfaith to be a phenomenal resource for the Ocala residents. We are very fortunate to have this caring resource that 'walks the talk'. It is wonderful that we can help so many people with this basic necessity of food. To see people smile and to know that we have helped in a very tangible way is just an amazing feeling. There is possibly no greater reward than being able to give clients a basic necessity, such as food. I feel that I receive a gift every time I volunteer and I appreciate the staff at the pantry that does this day in and day out.

The residents and the stores who donate to Interfaith in Ocala are incredibly generous, this, coupled with the fact that the food pantry has freezer and refrigeration, allows the pantry to give meats and dairy. I don't think everyone understands how fortunate we are to have refrigeration at the scale that allows us to store and provide these foods. On Top of the World, where we live, is very supportive of Interfaith and they run food drives managed by Vanessa (and others) in their Sales department. Ken Colen is a huge supporter of this and other charities. Of course there are many other Interfaith volunteers from On Top of the World and the residents there are caring and donate to many causes. Many folks are surprised to find out the myriad of causes with which Interfaith is involved: pantry, kitchen, Food for Kids, medical and dental care, shelter etc. My sister in law, Donna, finds great joy in helping feed children through the Food for Kids program.

I started volunteering back when I lived in Phoenix, Arizona. My volunteering started when I worked in the corporate world and then continued when I had family members who experienced tough life issues. This type of long term volunteering taught me that solutions are rarely simple, there is rarely a 'one issue' problem, but that I should always do what I can to help- and that is what I do.

But, it's not just about volunteering, we all can help in many ways. **My parents taught me through words and deeds, that it's not about what we 'collect' as we go through life, but it's about helping people.** We may never know the impact of our one small act or kind word might have on a person. I would like to give a big THANK YOU to the Pantry staff and volunteers. They are the most wonderful group.



**Gabe loves helping out**

## From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley-Greenway



Happy Spring! One of my favorite things about this time of year is taking time to show some extra love to our volunteers. Did you know that Interfaith utilizes nearly 300 volunteers over the course of an average month to fulfill our mission? If we had to do all of this work with paid staff, there is no way we could help as many people. Every volunteer hour donated allows us to use our monetary gifts to provide services to our clients. Most of our volunteers come for 4 hours each week. They are truly the ones who make the most difference for our clients. **If you are reading this and volunteer in any capacity at Interfaith, from the bottom of my heart, THANK YOU.** The volunteers I work most closely with are our Board of Directors. Currently we have 17 directors for which I am very grateful. So here is a "shout-out" to the team that keeps me going: Mary Beth Neely, John Bradish, Doug Day, Anne Parker, Monica Bryant, Wesley Wheeler, Michael Jordan, Scot Quintel, Craig Baggs, Quinnette Durkin, Kent Adams, Alejandra Arango, Rebecca O'Connor, Winn Keeton, Jamie Gilmore, Winston Needham and currently serving as our board president, Wally Wagoner. Thank you for all of your support, guidance and encouragement.

If you are looking for a way to give back and have some extra time on your calendar, prayerfully consider Interfaith. We are currently looking for a team of volunteers to help us launch our service areas in our Engagement Center currently under construction. It will be finished in August and we plan to start training new volunteers in July. As for someone who not only works with volunteers, but volunteers myself, there are very few joys in life that compare to knowing that you restored hope to someone in a hopeless situation.

## Above and Beyond to Help Shelter Residents Matter, by Yanique Duff-Ballard

Every volunteer that comes through our doors impacts our shelter residents tremendously in one way or another. The love, support, knowledge, and dedication you all have for our shelter residents is more than we can ask for. We want to say a special thank you to all our Dinner Providers, Devotion Pastors, Praying Princess leaders, Budgeting Teachers, and our monetary donors. It's because of you and your continued support, that our shelter program has a 93% success rate.

I want to say a very special thank you to a volunteer who has been ministering to our shelter residents for over 10 years. Mark is our Bible study teacher who faithfully comes each week and fellowship with our residents. Mark has helped us house residents who have completed the shelter program in his rental properties

**Mark has been changing lives with us for over 10 years, going above and beyond to make a difference.**

in the past, and has even helped a shelter staff. He has offered resident employment in his place of business and has gone about and beyond



**Bible Study Teacher Mark is all smiles and all heart**

for our program. Mark has made such a positive impact at the shelter, that a past resident and his son still attended our Bible study to this day. We all look to Mark for guidance, and his teaching feeds our minds, bodies, and souls. Thank you Mark for all you do for our shelter and staff. The foundations you've laid have and continue to support the most vulnerable. We appreciate you showing up week after week. Thank you for your kindness and your and your family's continued support. You embody our mission statement as a community of faith, called by God to serve others. Mark has served God and Interfaith faithfully and we truly appreciate him.

## Interfaith's High Tea Seeking Donations - Support A Host Today



Be on the lookout this month for table hosts from our High Tea soliciting donations to help them compete for the Golden Teapot award for raising the most money for our homeless shelter and programs. If you know a Host you can go to [www.iesmarion.org/donate](http://www.iesmarion.org/donate) - select High Tea from the dropdown, and be sure to write the Host's name in the comment box at the bottom of the page! Our Hosts this year are:

Amy Jo Lord, Albert Lynch & Kenny Vilanova, Alejandra Arango, Anne Wagoner & Becky Drake, Brianna Zubieta, Camilo Gomez, Carri Scott, Cherie Foster & Kathy Martin, Jamie Tardiff, Jennifer Arvanitis, Joy Schimborski, Maria Roman, Maria Zubieta, Deanna Morey &

Leighandra Gibbons, Sara Long, Michelle Collier, Tammy Hoff, Tammy Tealing, Tirsia Rodriguez, Jody Michaud, Monica Bryant & Valerie Mitchell, Michelle Smith and Karla Greenway. Who will you vote for with your dollars?!



## Special Gifts

### In MEMORY of:

Margaret Guinn  
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Bo Williams  
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Gertrude "Trudy" O'Connell  
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George Ecker  
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Dan Cooper  
By: Judy Chambers

John Hagood  
By: Jarl Hagood

Jerry Simpson  
By: Tim Shanahan

Lana Mizspn Ponder  
By: Winston & Karen Needham

### In HONOR of:

Wes Wheeler  
By: Daniel & Mary Hightower  
Michael & Pataricia McGinnis  
Nancy Hart

### Honor Someone Special

Give a gift to someone special - an honorary or memorial donation in their name to Interfaith! The person honored (or their family) will receive a letter of acknowledgement. Please contact Kayla at 629-8868 x202 or Kayla.Hess@IESmarion.org. Mail donations to PO Box 992, Ocala, FL 34478.

## Special Thanks to...

Special thanks for these large donations (in pounds): First Assembly of God Church: 256; First Christian Church: 272; First Presbyterian Church: 1,801; Church of Hope: 325; Silver Springs Shores Moose Lodge: 170; Ocala West United Methodist Church: 578; Dept of Juvenile Justice: 42; First Baptist Church Ocala: 397; Nita Williams: 50; Countryside Presbyterian Church: 415; and Cross Point Church: 519. Also: Paradise Ministries: 48 cases oatmeal; All About U Estate Sales: 22 bins new clothes; Miranda Greenwood: 25 packs water and Christian Blankets Inc: 44 blankets.

Every year our Tax Collector, George Albright and his team host a car show and plant sale to benefit local charities. Interfaith is blessed to be among the beneficiaries. This year even though weather prohibited them from holding the event, the wonderful businesses that sponsored agreed to still bless the charities with funds. Thank you to everyone who participated for the \$5,000 to help us help Marion County residents in need.



We were honored to celebrate the lives and legacies of 3 very special people during our Legacies of Love luncheon in February. Thank you to everyone that attended and contributed to Interfaith in honor of Wes Wheeler and Monica Bryant, and in memory of Wayne McDonald. Their impact on our community will continue to be felt for years to come.



## 18 Year Old Volunteers His Time and Talents

JJ Dandridge, young man of 18 years old, has a heart of gold. He has been volunteering at Interfaith Thrift Store since the age of 16, testing out bikes to make sure they are sturdy for customers and clients, checking electronics to ensure all items are in working order, and assisting donors with donation drop offs. He has a kind, giving heart and has a delightful spirit.

In two years at the store, JJ says that he has learned many important life skills, like working with tools to build and repair small furniture pieces. JJ credits Lawrence Stewart, our Warehouse Assistant and personal mentor, with teaching him effective communication habits to assist in interacting with donors, customers, and clients.

JJ's mom, Tiffany, says, *"To watch my son give his time and God given talents to help others is what it's all about. Together we can change tomorrow for each other."*

JJ also volunteers at The Rock with Tiffany.



**JJ works at the Thrift Store and loves helping out**

JJ says he looks up to his mom and stepdad Ryan, Lawrence, and You-Tube star, Mr. Beast. JJ aspires to work in the music industry, creating scores for Marvel movies, learning how to weld, or work in the construction industry in the field of demolition.

Pastor Jody Schaible says, "JJ is a very dedicated young man with Christ in his heart who cares for others more than himself"

We are truly blessed to be a part of the life of this young man starting on his journey into the world at large. We are sure that JJ will have a positive impact to everyone he encounters, through his pure heart and through Christ driven actions. We prays that he continues to possess and grow in the qualities that he brings to the Thrift Store. Thank you, JJ, for being a part of our ministry at Interfaith.

**By Shannon Pickering, Thrift Store Manager**



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- Winn Keeton
- Mary Beth Neely
- Winston Needham
- Rebecca O'Connor
- Anne W Parker
- Scot Quintel
- Wally Wagoner
- Wesley Wheeler
- Karla Grimsley-Greenway, Chief Executive Officer

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

**Even the Smallest Contribution Matters in the Lives of Others in Need**

Kathy has been volunteering with Interfaith for four months now. She was recommended by a friend who works here. ***Kathy believes that even the smallest contribution to Interfaith can help the community. Kathy is always donating car loads of men's clothing for our free boutique, which is always our greatest need. It's an incredible blessing!***

In the past, Kathy ran a non-profit organization for 15 years and provided hundreds of blankets to new moms. Though she received numerous thank you letters for her help, here at Interfaith, she gets to meet the people she helps face to face and witness their expressions of gratitude every day.

One encounter that stands out about Kathy, is when a young mother with her little girl came to Interfaith late one afternoon asking for food, even though we had already reached our limit of 80 families for the day and were closed. Kathy was able to bring her in anyway and the look of appreciation on the mother's face was truly heartwarming. Kathy is a true asset to the Interfaith community and we are grateful for her selfless service and dedication. Her story is an inspiration to us all. We would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all that she does and for being an example of how one person can make a difference.



**Kathy's smile puts clients at ease.**

To anyone considering volunteering, we encourage you to follow Kathy's lead and get involved. Even the smallest contribution can make a huge difference in someone's life. Together, we can make our community a better place for all.

**by Andrea Jordan, Social Services Manager**