

Volunteer Delivers Food to Disabled Clients, by Gloria Cribben, Engagement Center Specialist

Our Interfaith Food Pantry is designed to provide food to our clients who are able to come to our campus and pick-up when they are in need, but like all good rules there need to be exceptions. My client Reuben is a classic example. Reuben is blind. He has no family or friends here in Ocala who have a vehicle and walking 2.5 miles with his vision disability is out of the question. Reuben receives SNAP food assistance, but he always runs out of food before his next SNAP award. And like so many of our clients, he really relies upon our food pantry to bridge the gap for needed food, especially with the rising grocery costs. In total, we currently have about four disabled (mostly elderly) people like Reuben who need their food from the pantry delivered.

Recently our volunteer who delivered these vital monthly food boxes was no longer able to help. But God provided before we could even put word out. One of our Board Members, Dr Jordan, found out and stepped up to help. He's so kind and grateful to be able to help our clients, and they are certainly grateful in return. This is just another way God uses people to volunteer at Interfaith – to be a blessing and to be blessed by it.

Another area that needs volunteers is our Food Pantry. We've had several volunteers move or retire and we've been left with many empty spaces that desperately need to be filled. You can choose a shift in the morning or afternoon (one day a week) and you'll work right in the heart of one of our biggest ministries. The best thing about volunteering a set shift each week is that our volunteers become like family and enjoy the time they spend together. If interested in becoming part of our family, please reach out to our Volunteer Coordinator, Tina at Tina.Reid@iesmarion.org or 352-644-9196. We would love for you to start this new year meeting new people and having the great opportunity to feel like a blessing to those in need.



Pictured right are: Pantry Volunteers: David, Carolynn, Judy and Mary

Grant Helps Save Lives, by Cherie Galloway, CFL Manager

In 2023 the Center for Life saw 1,685 clients! As we begin a new year, we'd like to share some of our successes.

Jean came to us as a diabetic that was homeless. With the help of Hope Clinic (a free clinic), we provided vouchers for her medicine. And like many, we've been able to get her moved over to a primary care physician at Heart of Florida where she gets her diabetic and psychotropic meds. She now works for a Marion County school and is stably housed. We continue to help with appointment and medication vouchers.

Lisa was referred to us this summer by Advent when she was hospitalized for cardiac and diabetic issues. We took care of her immediate need at the Hope Clinic and then referred her to Heart of Florida. She was able to get a primary care provider there and was referred to a specialist for her heart. She has been to our office several times and is so grateful for our help in getting her health back. She even plans to volunteer soon.

James has been our client for quite some time now. He had insurance at one time and had to choose between keeping his insurance or keeping his car and paying rent. He is able to get his medications using vouchers from the Center for Life and the Patient Assistance Program (where the manufacturer sends him medicine at no cost). He originally came to the Center for Life in very poor health. He was taking nursing classes and was failing as he was missing **(continued page 2)**

From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley-Greenway



2024 is going to be a great year here at Interfaith. We hope to expand our ministry to the homeless by opening the Engagement Center that is currently under construction. This space is going to allow us to work more closely with many of our community partners with which we share clients. We don't want this to be a space just for our staff, but for other agencies to come and serve those for whom transportation is a barrier. You can be sure that you'll be hearing more about it throughout the year.

This year I have a goal to get out and connect with more of our churches. Many of our long-time supporters have had pastoral changes or may have just lost touch with our ministry. I would love to come and share all of the amazing work our staff and volunteers are doing here. If you would like me to come and speak, please reach out to me at karla@iesmarion.org or 352-629-8868 ext. 219. Or if you would like to just come and take a tour, I would love the opportunity to show you around.



Also, I hope you will join us next month for our 2024 Legacies of Love event. This year we are honoring Wes Wheeler, Monica Bryant and the late Wayne McDonald. We would love for you to join us and make the day even more special! Even if you don't know these individuals, I promise you will leave this event inspired - I always do! We can all use a little inspiration these days. As always, thank you for all you do to support us and for helping us care for those in need.

Christmas Blessings in December by Yanique Duff-Ballard, Resident Assistant

Even with a tough economy, there are still individuals, families, churches, and organizations willing to help those in need. This past year, more than ever before, people reached out to help however they could. To our generous donors and community partners who helped our current and past shelter residents have a normal holiday season, we thank you!

Being homeless is hard, especially around the holiday seasons when they have no home to celebrate in or family to celebrate with. Our residents rely on Interfaith and our partners to kindle the holiday spirit and help them look past their current state of affairs and enjoy the wonderful festivities.

People often say that the true meaning behind the season is not about the gifts and festivities but about the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And God gave us the best gift in Jesus Christ, and we celebrate that by sharing our talents and time to His children.



Christmas Hugs

A special thank you to everyone that helped make our Christmas special...the Twilight Cruiser of Belleview for their 23rd annual toy drive – their toy drive helps so many children and families in need every year! A heartfelt thank you to Cornerstone School, The Bar Association of Marion County, St. John Lutheran Church, Mr. & Mrs. Claus, Charlene Lowe, Adela Juras and her team, Cindy MacKay, Fierle Family, Haley Freeman and friends, Missy March, Brother's Keepers, Interfaith Thrift Store for helping with gifts, wrapping paper, the warm sweaters and jackets. And especially our donors that give throughout the year to make an impact in the lives of those in need. Finally, our shelter volunteers and their amazing donation of time and talent. We thank you all and wish you a bountiful new year!

Grant Helps Save Lives continued from Page 1

... so many classes due to poor health. Now, he has passed his courses and works for a local hospital. He is consistently taking his medicine and living a normal life.

All of these patients and more are provided care and life-saving services thanks to our partnership with the Marion County Hospital District. We are grateful to provide for so many in need thanks to that grant.

Additionally, proceeds from our Thrift Store also pays for medication costs for those that need it. It's always so amazing to think that someone donating a sofa (for example) at our Thrift Store, and it being sold to someone that needs it, provides funds for someone's medications. Talk about a full circle blessing! Everyone wins.

In addition, the Center for Life hosts the Freedom Dental Clinic. They see as many as 90 clients per month at our facility at no charge to the patient.

We are so grateful to our donors and partnerships who make all this possible, and look forward to an amazing year ahead.

Thank you so much from all of us at the Center for Life. We pray for an amazing year ahead!

Special Gifts

In MEMORY of:

Lee Goodson

By: Alice Goodson

Laura Johnson

By: James & Katherine Yancey

Hazel Gene McLeod

Margaret Peggy Knight

By: Cindy Fleetwood

Julie Moody

G W Eisner

By: Tim & Lyn Shanahan

Albert Peek

By: Sandy & Robin McBride

Mike & Diane Finn

Ruthanne & Tim Mizner

Harry & Evelyn Dannels

By: Charlotte Justice

Rev Dr Robert Greaves

By: Patricia Greaves

Kay Richardson

Randy Steele

By: Ruthanne & Tim Mizner

Lee Medema

By: Karen Medema

Terry Sanders

Grace Trice

By: William & Elaine Trice

Andrea Green

By: Susan Greiner

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 Gifts

In HONOR of:

Jan Knorr

Larry Mack

By: Rhonda Mack

Janet Daugherty

Mata Amritanandamayi

Devi's 70th birthday

By: Mata Amritanandamayi

Center

Dylan DeSantis

By: Andy & Louann DeSantis

Ken & MaryEllen Mumy

Brad & Karl Kelsall

Mike Hawkins

Gail MacLean

Tom & Dominique Powers

Tim & Lou Petty

Mike & Jan Hay

Dennis Darnell

Bob Rohrer Family

Jerry Erickson

Steve, Cathy, Michael & John

Jane & Kim

Sam & Barneli

Kris & Angei

Leah

Tim, Katy Jo and JR

Jeff & Val

By: Judy & Wayne Davis

Rev Dr Walk Jones

By: Michael E Morehouse

Beth & Craig Cannon

Harris Cannon

Alice Cannon

Chris Richardson

By: Ann Richardson

It's PB&J Time Thanks to Regions Bank Branches, by Food 4 Kids

We are so grateful to all the staff and customers at our local Regions Banks for their Peanut Butter & Jelly Drive. Not only did many of them volunteer with us, but also decided to have a friendly competition between branches for the most PB&J. We were amazed at all the displays they put together at each branch! Together they donated 1,797 jars and \$1,700 worth of donations. We feel like it was the biggest contribution of PB&J that we have ever received at one time. The impact this donation will have on the children of Marion County will be felt for months. We are so proud of the teams and community for pulling this off! Thank you for the amazing displays at each location. You are all winners! Special thanks to Vicki, Samantha and Jessica for spearheading the drive.

Want to find out how your business can sponsor food items for our backpack program?

Contact Teesha at (352) 620-8239 or Teesha.Garcia@IESmarion.org

Special Thanks to...

Special thanks for these large donations (in pounds):

Marion County Tax Collector: 3,730; Rotary Club: 560; Meadowbrook Church: 3,403; Ocala Golf Carts, Softball: 1,821; St John's Lutheran Church: 549; St George Anglican: 100; Palm Cay: 1,740; Pepsi Beverage Company: 150; First Assembly of God Church: 460; Women's Council of Realtors: 204; Vine Management: 168; Silver Springs Shores Moose Lodge: 352; American Panel: 231; Big Lots: 700; Twilight Cruisers: 291;

West Marion & Dunnellon Moose: 649; South Pointe Church: 597; HCA Florida Heart & Lung: 210; Custom Windows: 426; Cumberland International Trucks: 677; Marion Charter School: 1,141; Crossroads Academy: 500; Real Truck: 241; Missionary Baptist Mission Church: 516; Cart World Golf Cars: 413; Upstate NY, Upper Midwest Club: 1,297; St Paul's United Methodist Church: 757; Kestrel Neighborhood: 360; Great American Insurance: 207; Countryside Presbyterian: 494; Miller Pipe: 137; Latigo 27 Apartments: 53; Concentra, Leesburg: 335; Concentra, Ocala: 537; First American Title: 120; The Way Christian Church: 137; Immerse Church of Ocala: 592

Also donated: World Equestrian Center: 100 bags of linens; Belleview SDA/Advent Health: 20 boxes rice & beans; Remax Priemer Realty: 78 bags of food; Grace Christian School: 50 food bags; St John's Lutheran Church: 386 socks, 450 underwear, 30 glasses; Cross Pointe Church: 8 bags of Thanksgiving Food/Publix gift cards; Bob & Christy Carlson: 8 turkeys, 3 hams; Edward Cole: 8 cases of Ensure; Bill Hitt: 43 turkeys and Ashlee Anderson: 1,300 diapers

Thanks to the Twilight Cruisers and everyone who participated in their annual car show! An abundance of toys so that our residents can pick out gifts for their children and over \$5,000 to support the ministry of Interfaith!



P.O. Box 992 • Ocala, FL 34478

Return Postage Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #243
Ocala, FL 34478

IES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Kent Adams
- Alejandro Arango
- Craig Baggs
- Monica Bryant
- John Bradish
- Doug Day
- Quinnette Durkin
- Michael Jordon
- Winn Keeton
- Mary Beth Nealy
- 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



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.

Need For Mens Clothing & Hygiene
By: Andrea Jordan, Social Services Manager

My Social Services Volunteers are the best! They are always providing when we're in need... out of reading glasses; Jennifer shows up with a box full. Running low on hygiene items; Kathryn provides. Lucy donated a whole Christmas tree trimming set. And Kathy is always asking me what items we need. She then spreads the word to her "people" and next thing I know she's delivering truck loads to our Thrift Store.

What kind of manager would I be if I didn't do the same? Our Free Clothing Boutique is always in need of men's clothing. Our racks are almost always empty (need: jeans, shirts, dress clothes). New women's and men's underwear are also needed. I make up "compassion bags" for the literally homeless and we are lacking in travel sized shampoo and conditioner. These bags are given to the homeless and it brightens their day! Thank you for donating!

Thrift Store News
by Shannon Pickering, Thrift Store Manager

Welcome to the New Year! 2024 should prove to be an amazing year.

New year, new you? Cleaning out the house and want to donate? Remember, the Interfaith Thrift Store does pick ups in your home or business!

All items should be in gently used and resellable condition, major appliances in working order, and clothing should be clean and ready to go! Give us a call at 352-351-3541 and let's get something scheduled.

Ready to add a new look to your home? Stop by and see what we have for you today at 718 North Pine near beautiful downtown Ocala!

