

Winter Coats in High Demand, By David Creek, Truck Driver

I was driving home late the other night when Nat King Cole's enchanting voice emerged from the radio. The Christmas lullaby attested to the truth that even the most pitiful of homes is made immensely warm and wealthy where there is love:

*A house with love in it is rich indeed
Although there are a thousand things that house may need
The carpet may be old, the room so plain and bare
And yet it's beautiful somehow when love is living there*

My eyes instantly stung with tears at the reminiscence of my grandparents' home, where the two most beautiful and gentle spirits resided. At the remembrance of the house I spent my childhood in, I smiled at the thought that I too was now headed to my own home and beautiful wife.

But the song then took on a very sad form as I thought of all the people who have never known a house with love in it. All the people of a cold past, living in the cold streets in a savagely cold world, whose ceiling is the sky and whose chandelier is the evening moon.

Recently, our Warehouse Manager, Steve Clem, set out a giant box filled with winter coats for the homeless folks that converge daily at our Homeless Park. "It was empty before I could park the forklift fifteen feet away," he said in a state of amazement. Another bin was delivered and another feeding frenzy ensued, although sadly a few walked away shivering and empty-handed.

As I stood in my house late that night, there was only one part of the song that rang untrue. There weren't a thousand things it lacked, but a thousand things to be given to others. Opening my closet, I felt a twinge of nausea when I discovered I had eight coats. Eight coats - seven of which I hadn't worn in so long, I forgot I even had them.

And that's when the song took on its fullest understanding. That a house of love is the house that empties its shelves and that empties its pantries of its violent excess in order to fill another. That the very world in which we inhabit is to be a house with love in it, where the coat on our back is removed and sacrificially transferred from stranger to stranger, keeping the human family warm.

Winter coats remain in high demand. Perhaps you too will be amazed at how many coats you have lining your closet, and what a wonderful gift those coats could bring.

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7



*To make a donation of warm coats, please drop them off at our
Clothing Drop Box at 435 NW 2nd Street, Ocala, or you can drop them
off at our Warehouse while you're dropping off a food donation.
We'd love to say hello, and thanks, for helping those in need.*

From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley



Looking into 2018, here is what I hope for Interfaith:

- More patients seen by our partners at Hope Clinic and find relief from their physical suffering
- More people able to see a dentist (many for the first time) and find freedom from pain because of FreeDOM Clinic
- More people have their clear vision restored because they received the necessary prescription glasses
- More of our shelter residents leave us financially secure and stably housed
- More of our homeless friends find housing
- More families in Marion County are doing better financially so we can give more food to the families still in need
- More children go to bed with their tummy's satisfied
- More volunteers find fulfillment by helping others
- More people learn about the great work that is being done here and get involved!

So if I had to pick a word for 2018, my word is “more”. In this world of gluttony and greed, sometimes I think it is actually okay to want more.

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:20

Donors Provide Gift of Life, by Joan Truby, Center for Life Receptionist

Did you know that shopping at the IES Thrift Store can give the gift of life? Funding for emergency medications at the Center for Life comes from the proceeds of our Thrift Store. We have many clients coming through our doors, some just leaving the hospital emergency room, with new prescriptions and no money to buy them. Those medications include some expensive drugs, that are also lifesaving. This is incredibly stressful for them.

Tom and Sarah recently came through our door with a long list of medications after he had been hospitalized for a severe heart condition. They had no insurance but were able to pay for all Tom's medications except one, which was around \$800, and the most necessary. We were able to provide that medication for him through one of our contracted pharmacies for \$159. When we gave them the news, tears of hope and thankfulness overflowed. We explained the source of the funding and suggested they tell all their friends to take any gently used items to IES Thrift Store. Sarah said, “We are so very grateful. You literally saved my husband's life by helping us with his medication. I don't know what we would have done without you.”

And even better, we have folks showing up at the Thrift Store making donations of wonderful items – gently used furniture, nice clothing and collectibles – proclaiming that they want to help save lives! And they are doing just that!

Please, stop by The Center for Life for a tour of our beautiful facility and experience your donations serving our community. And don't forget, shop at our Thrift Store to make this all possible.



Customer Dropping off Donation at Thrift Store

How You Can Get Involved, by Sonya Tyler, Director of Operations

On the third Tuesday of every month Interfaith puts on a Neighborhood Breakfast. It's a chance to get to know our friends in the community that often come to us for help, and usually visit our Homeless Park, located next to our Warehouse. This park is a safe place for them, which is nearly impossible when you live on the street or in a homeless camp. Our breakfast is a way of letting these sweet souls know that people care about them.

We need partners in the community to help host this event. Come meet some of our friends like Red, Myra or Dawn. They are so grateful for a warm breakfast and someone to giving them encouragement, or even just a friendly 'good morning'.

The staff at Interfaith has hosted the first two, and they have been a huge hit. Your group can bring breakfast items – pancakes and sausage or biscuits and gravy, fruit, pastries, donuts, etc., coffee and juice, as well as plates, cups, utensils. We just need 12 businesses or groups for this year – would you please consider supporting this great ministry?

For more information, or to sign up, please contact Jessica Rodriguez Director of Ministries at 352-629-8868 ext 201.

Special Gifts

In MEMORY of:

Ruth Henderson
Carol O'Neil
By: Keith and Carolyn Fender
G Fabian, Sr
By: William and Cathy Vande Ven
Rae Dand
By: Louise Moore
Sheldon Scott
By: Patience Barberie
Michael and Carol Balbes
Arnold and Mildred Olstein
Dayle and Steven Silver
Brenda Zeese
By: Dorothy Thompson
Brad Nimmo
Sheldon Scott
Frank Phillips
Virginia Colatruglio
By: Karla Grimsley

In HONOR of:

Bob, Jamie & Rex Rohrer
Tim & Lou Petty
Tom & Dominique Powers
Jeff & Val Ottaway
Kim Horn & Shannon Nail
Denny & Tammy Feldman
Dennis & Anita Darnell
Doug & Laney Lamay
Gail MacLean
Terry Angelo
Jerry Erickson
Jackie Leffew
Nat & Angie Sherer
Steve, Cathy, Michael & John Fitzner
Ray, Tracey, Aubrey & Grant Alderman
Mike & Kim Davis
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Jane Sadusky & Kim Bean
Darlene Sadusky
Merle Skinner
Jeff & Kim Sime
Kris & Diane Hennum
Sam & Bornali
Max Kellerman
By: Wayne & Judy Davis
Wayne Davis Quarter Horses

In HONOR of:

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John and Gwen Peterson
Robert and Mary Moore
Johnny Mac and Lucy Smith
By: Bill and Lynn Rainbow
Mr. and Mrs. Chris Armstrong
Mr. and Mrs. Scott Armstrong
Mr. and Mrs. Doug LaMay
Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Davis
Mr. and Mrs. David Witter
Mr. and Mrs. John Woelfel
Mr. and Mrs. Harold Schinman
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Powers
By: Tim and Lou Petty

For information on memorial or honorary donations contact Kayla at 629-8868x202 or Kayla.Grimmsley@IESmarion.org. Mail to: PO Box 992, Ocala, FL 34478

Our Special Thanks...

Special thanks to the County Commissioners and all of Marion County for the Bring the Harvest Food Drive this year which brought in over 6,500 pounds of food and hygiene to Interfaith!

A big shout out to Sellstate Shares for a \$5,000 donation from their Whiskey, Wine & Wigs event. (pictured right).



Thanks to Sue from Solid Waste for helping to deliver hand-made toys made by the hands of some of the men currently at Lowell Prison. The adorable wooden chairs, puzzles, treasure boxes, and bassinets will bring a lot of children joy this Christmas!

Thank you to Steve Hawter Jr and the Twilight Cruisers for a truckload of toys and \$5,500 for our shelter resident's children and others in need. God bless you!

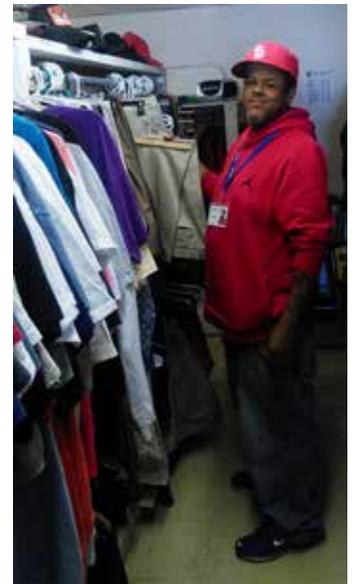
We loved the visit from Back to Health Chiropractic recently and their "random acts of kindness" day. Thank you for being a blessing to Interfaith.

I Give, Because You Gave, by Koya Harris-Beard Intake Mgr

About a month ago, our CEO, Karla Grimsley encouraged the staff to take on a new perspective towards the population that we served; she encouraged us to see Jesus in everyone and look for ways to say yes when at all possible. This new perspective led us to understand that many of the people we serve, want to serve as well – to give back. We have recently been practicing asking clients if they would like to serve with us in different ministries around Interfaith. This has allowed us to connect with so many wonderful people.

I want to introduce you to Mike. He is a young man who frequently hangs around outside the Intake Office. Mike had a lot of free time and decided that he should give back. Mike has received services from Interfaith before and felt because Interfaith gave to him, he should give back. Mike is not a Florida native, he moved to Ocala from New Jersey to be closer to his mother. He states that he was always raised to help others and he knew about Interfaith from living in this area. Mike said, "I want people who are hurting, hungry and who have taken major setbacks in life, to know that Interfaith is a place that they can find hope."

Mike shows up faithfully to volunteer in our Free Clothing Boutique and sorting room 3 days a week. He spends the entire day sorting and hanging clothing, cleaning, lifting heavy items and filling in wherever asked. Mike is the prime example of our new perspective. Mike is helping us to grow and broaden our mindset on how we view others who don't look like us, talk like us, or live where we live.





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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.

Helping Hungry Kids, by Karen Fant

Recently the residents of Ocala Palms hosted their dance and craft fundraiser for Food 4 Kids. Each event had a 50-50 raffle which raised over \$1,944. Both winners of the 50-50 raffle donated their money back to Food 4 Kids. We can't say enough about the generosity of the Ocala Palms community. Thank you for helping to feed the children of Marion County.

What a success the East Marion Elementary School Food Drive was for Food 4 Kids. In one week, the awesome families from the school brought in 4,348 items of food, weighing 3,676 pounds. East Marion brings in more food than any other school in Marion County. We are so thankful to Counselor Janice Ray, and all the school employees who helped with this food drive to make it such a success. Food 4 Kids can't thank you enough. (Pictured above)



Kudos from Community, By Sonya Tyler

With technology growing in leaps and bounds, it gives us an opportunity to reach so many of our clients when they go looking for help. Our website is a wealth of information about what all we do and the services we provide for clients. Recently updated, we're excited at the responses we've received from the community. If you haven't checked it out lately – visit us at www.IESmarion.org, and you can also make a donation there as well!

Speaking of the web, we recently received a Google review from one of our clients. This is exactly what we strive for – to be the hands and feet of Jesus:

The people at Interfaith went above and beyond for my family when we were in need. Never thought the day would come when I needed help, as I have always been the helper. They didn't make me feel bad because I had fallen on hard times. They help you keep your dignity. I really can't thank them enough for their help. God bless them. By Patti