

Life Change at Food 4 Kids, by Karen Fant, Manager

Here at Interfaith our mission is to help others by changing their lives for the better as much as possible. I'm always amazed at how the small things that we take for granted mean so much to people less fortunate. On Mondays at Food 4 Kids, we have to go to 2 stores where we have purchased food and load that food in the box truck. It is usually 3 to 4 pallets full of food.

In order to do this, we have to have help. So, every Monday the Boot Camp Program is instrumental in making that happen. The Lowell Woman's Institute program is for non-violent offenders who have served most of their sentence and have agreed to join this military type program to lessen their sentence. These ladies come to one of the stores to load the food in the box truck then they come to Food 4 Kids to unload the truck into our building. It is hard and strenuous work but they always do it with a smile on their faces and seem to enjoy helping us. As a thank you to them, the week before they graduate we take them to the Interfaith Clothing Boutique and let them get a couple of outfits and shoes for when they are released from prison. It is one of the highlights of this job for me. Some have not had on street clothes for years. The last time I took a group over to Boutique, one of the girls said, "I feel like I am shopping at Kohls or Macys! I haven't had on real clothes in over 4 years." At their graduation, Daphne and I take them a certificate showing they have volunteered here, as well as a box of chocolate and flowers. Everyone in life deserves a second chance and I am thrilled that I can be a small part of their lives for a brief moment. It is very rewarding and Food 4 Kids is blessed to have this relationship with these young women. It is a win - win for both of us.



Volunteer Ella Daniels Receives Award



Congratulations to Interfaith Volunteer, Ella Daniels, for being awarded the Marion County Children's Alliance Children's Champion Award. Ella serves in many areas from being a former Interfaith Board Member, delivering backpacks for Food 4 Kids to packing groceries in our Food Pantry. In Food 4 Kids alone, she's driven over 2,424 miles in the past 11 years to make sure that 660 children had food. Ella has touches many lives. Thank you Ella, for all that you do for the children of our community.

Ella is pictured above with Children's Alliance Executive Director Beth McCall.

Our Volunteers Are a Gift

I wanted to express our appreciation to all our volunteers! It's been an amazing year and we are so blessed for the gift of your time and talents! We recently showed our gratitude at Volunteer Appreciation Holiday Breakfast, which is sponsored by Craig Baggs with Freedom Health. And this year, we have had over a hundred new volunteers join our Interfaith family! On behalf of all the staff and our clients, we hope you have an amazing holiday and a wonderful new year! You truly are a gift!

by Tina Reid, Volunteer Coordinator



From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley



As we run toward the finish line of 2018 we hope that everyone has a safe and joy filled holiday season. Hold your loved ones close and savor the moments as you're creating memories. If you haven't yet made your annual donation to Interfaith, please don't forget us! We operate solely on the gifts from our donors so if you've never contributed, please consider joining the special group of people, churches, organizations and businesses that make this ministry possible. With your help we can make a difference for many who are struggling to have basic needs met. Of course, one way to make a significant donation is to become a part of "The Solution", by becoming a monthly donor. You can do it very quickly and easily online at www.iesmarion.org/donate or you can request 12 giving envelopes and we will mail them to you. Just call Kayla at 352-629-8868 ext. 202. Another way to help the less fortunate is to consider a planned gift in your will. This is a way to reach into the future and make a difference. These gifts typically go into our endowment account and we multiply the donation through investments. Interfaith has been able to re-roof our building, purchase a much needed box truck and help with some of the ongoing costs of operating with funds generated by our endowment. For a tour and to get more information just contact me at 352-629-8868 ext. 219. We are exceedingly grateful to those of you who are faithful donors. We couldn't do this important work without you!

On another note, thank you so much for the outpouring of love and prayers at the recent loss of my mother. From the cards to the texts to phone calls, you have made this difficult time bearable with your kindness to me.

May God bless you abundantly and Merry Christmas!

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need you will abound in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8



Who Wants to Know? by Koya Harris, Intake Manager

A few weeks ago as I was assisting in restocking our free Clothing Boutique, I had an encounter with a woman named Meg. She appeared to be in such a grouchy mood and I immediately thought "How can I brighten her day?" I tried my usual smile and making funny small talk, but that didn't work. In fact, I made it worse! I tried offering assistance in the boutique, but that further agitated her. Feeling stumped, I went to the counter and prayed silently, "Father, how can I put a smile on this lady's face?" Instantly a thought came to my mind to ask her about her day. So, I walked up next to her and pretended to organize the clothing rack and I said, "So, how's your day going?" She clinched her fist and shouted "Who wants to know?!" I said, "I do!" She huffed and turned her back to me. I pushed a little bit further and I asked, "So are you going to tell me or not?" She quickly turned around, looked me square in the eye, pointed her finger in my face..

She said, "Why do you care?" I replied, "Because I love you and so does Jesus, and He doesn't want you to walk around feeling in despair—so again, how's your day going?"

I watched as the countenance of her face softened. She became teary eyed and began to weep. I embraced Meg and she began to tell me her life story. She was heartbroken because her marriage ended suddenly, and she was now homeless in a strange place with no family for the holidays. She just wanted to feel loved, to have a family, even if it wasn't her blood family. To make a long story short, that same afternoon, I received a call from a family that was looking for someone to share the holidays with. They were in the area and came to meet Meg. Unknown to any of us, they already knew her! On several occasions, they had bumped into Meg and had several short conversations with her. Needless to say, that was a joyous day for all of us! Now Meg will get the love and embrace she so desperately desired during the holidays with a family style meal for Thanksgiving and Christmas so that she doesn't have to be alone.

I want to encourage our readers during this holiday season to look for ways not only to be a tangible or financial blessing, but also for ways that you make genuine friendships with people who just need to know that somebody cares. I believe whole-heartedly that we should meet the needs of the poor as best we can, but I know all too well, that there is no greater feeling in the world than to have a family to love and embrace you in your most desperate times. So, the next time you encounter someone who appears to be having a tough time; before you walk away thinking they're just a lousy person, think of Meg's loneliness in her question, "Who wants to know?" and let your inner response of "I do" push you to reach out. Merry Christmas!

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

Special Gifts

In MEMORY of:

Alda Phillips
Interfaith Staff and Board

Jeffrey Lovell
By: Clover Lovell

Leon Shoaf, Jr
By: Jill Shoaf

Russell Elliott
David Tuck
By: Shirley and Carlyle Ausley

Mother
By: Maury and Susie Berger

Ann Raines
By: Ben and Helen Hayes

Joseph Russo
By: Robert Kuperberg

R E Nettles
By: Marsha Brown

Ruth & Dr C Brooks Henderson
By: Carolyn and Keith Fender

Alda Phillips
By: Bobby Rumalla

In HONOR of:

Biddie Kirk
By: Shirley and Carlyle Ausley

Drs Riadhman Manal Fakhoury
Malak and Aatif Qadeer
Daryl and Dee Collier
By: Jessica McCune

Cheri Casey's Birthday
By: Richard George

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.Grimmsley@IESmarion.org. Mail donations to PO Box 992, Ocala, FL 34478 or visit our website: www.IESmarion.org.

*Merry Christmas
from the Interfaith
Board and Staff!*

Many Thanks to...

So many food drives to be thankful for this past month- check out all the pounds of food: Ft King Presbyterian: 327, Ocala Woman's Club: 150, WINCO: 176, Beth Shalom Temple: 177, ARC: 563, Trinity Baptist: 292, Countryside Presbyterian: 523, Ocala Christian Academy Athletic Dept: 358, and 8th Street Church of God for 545.



And extra shout outs to Josh and the students at Ocali Charter School for their donation of 1,771 pounds of food and the Social Security Office: 3,392 pounds of food! (pictured left)

A HUGE thank you to Marion County Tax Collector's office for their contribution of over 600 turkeys so that many of our clients can have a holiday meal for Thanksgiving or Christmas!

Additionally there were several deliveries of food from Indivisible Stone Creek, Michel Design Works donated 50,000 bars of soap and special thanks to the ladies from St John Lutheran that stopped by after their "Undie Sunday" drive at church (pictured right). This year they dropped off 600 pairs of brand new underwear for our clients in need.

We are so grateful for the Men of Meadowbrook Golf Tournament, that provided \$5,200 for Interfaith!

Special thanks to Walmart for a check for \$1,000 at their recent grand re-opening!



Food 4 Kids Thanks...

Food 4 Kids has been so blessed recently with several awesome groups and businesses that supported our backpack program!

Ft King Middle School Natl Jr Honor Society dropped off 301 pounds of PB & J!

The Beta Sigma Phi Sorority - Laureatte Eta Lambda Chapter - gave a very generous donation of food.

Ocala Palms chose Food 4 Kids as the recipient of the proceeds from their Craft Show. (pictured right with Karen).

Brittany Klepper at Hale Products provided 92 jellies and 61 peanut butters!

Jeeptoberfest is the largest fundraiser for the Food 4 Kids backpack program. It was once again a huge success. Over 1,000 jeeps went on the trail on Saturday and Sunday. We are so thankful to be one of the charities chosen again this year to be the recipient of the funds from Jeeptoberfest!



Christmas at the Thrift Store, by Shannon Pickering Manager

Christmas is a time of joy and wonder, a time to be thankful for the people in our lives and realize the blessings that we have every day. This has been a big year of change for the thrift store, from new management to a facelift for the outside. We could not have done it without you, our donors, staff, volunteers, community, and board. Thank you so very much from the bottom of our hearts for the trust and dedication that you bring to this ministry.

And don't forget to stop by the Thrift Store to check out all our amazing deals for Christmas! We have beautiful Christmas trees, decorations and gifts (including many new items) for all your holiday needs!

From all of us at the store - may you have a blessed Christmas season and New Year!

When they saw the star, they rejoiced. Matthew 2:10

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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.

Art Class Brings Beauty

Is it possible to think about the Christmas season without thinking about children? At Center for Life we have received a beautiful gift from 3-12 year olds, from an Art Class at the Ed Croskey Community Center. I heard about the Art Class for neighborhood children which is a joint venture between Ocala Family Resource Center, and the City of Ocala. They love to participate, but they needed a place to display their art. God immediately said to me, "This is how you are going to fill your large bulletin board."

Each week, Melissa Casto delivers a lesson designed to address the issues these children face each day, especially the family and other life changes they experience. Art gives them a venue to express their emotions and share with their peers. And we benefit from their hard work by displaying their beautiful art! My husband and I went to the class to host a pizza party and meet them. Melissa's lesson and the children's responses touched our hearts. They will be changing our board on a regular basis, so if you have an opportunity, come by and see our awesome bulletin board created by Ocala's own children.



Joan Truby, CFL Manager

Residents Enjoy a Holiday Party

I'm so grateful to the staff for the awesome Halloween party we had at the Shelter. They made sure we each had costumes and plenty of treats for the little ones. Our 80s theme party had lots of bright colors and big hair! We even had karaoke, a scavenger hunt and pumpkin carving, which was a lot of fun for everyone! The air was filled with laughter and delight from the shelter children as we enjoyed cupcakes and hot chocolate together.

We were giddy from all of the treats and the room was filled with love and appreciation for our Interfaith family that I am so proud and lucky to be a part of. As a resident here at Interfaith, I'm grateful for Dawn, Sam and Michelle for their help, as we strive to make a better world for ourselves and our families.

Janice Prothro,
IES Resident



Dawn & Ann Marie