

Making a Difference, by Sonya Tyler, Director of Operations

This month's newsletter is packed full of God's blessings, and they all seem to focus on faith, hope, love and joy.

Looking back at 2018, I realized that we are heading into our

36 year of helping our community! And we've grown so much lately.

We now have 9 ministries areas, 8 separate buildings, and 7 Interfaith

food pantries we support! That's all done with 12 full time staff, 15 part

time staff, 293 awesome volunteers and 7 Urban League (free to us) paid workers.

Each day, we're expanding our reach to create other partnerships with local individuals,

businesses, churches and organizations to make life a little better for those in need. Because

together, we can make a difference in the lives of others! God bless you for your support of

Interfaith!

*Faith
Love
Hope
Joy*

Living on Faith, by Jessica Rodriguez, Director of Ministries

A little over 3 years ago I was hoping and praying about a job. I knew in my heart I didn't want just any job. I didn't want to work just anywhere or have a job where I felt like I just existed. I prayed so much that God would help me find a job where I didn't just work, but where I felt like I was doing God's work and being His hands and feet. Want to know a secret? I had never heard of Interfaith before I applied. However, when I came in for the interview and saw all that went on here, I was instantly intrigued.

At the time, I needed a full time job and this was part time. However, I felt like I wanted to be a part of Interfaith. So I started to pray again. Then I heard God so clear. He said, "Do you trust me?" And I said, "Of course!" I opened my bible and I read Matthew 6:30:

And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?



Jessica (on left), pictured with co-workers Sonya and Kayla

I instantly felt peace as a calm came over me. I knew what God wanted me to do. I felt confident that God would provide if I continued to put my faith in Him first.

February is my 3-year anniversary at Interfaith and I am currently the full time Director of Ministries. I oversee all the direct services to clients. I have met countless, amazing people doing God's work and I have the most amazing team. I love my job and everything we get to do on a daily basis to help our community. I am so grateful I get to work here, and I am blessed to be God's hands and feet.

**Clients Served
Jan - Dec 2018**

Food (Ocala)	10,043
Outreach (food):	
Marion Oaks	1,065
Reddick	1,147
Fellowship	425
Ft McCoy	1,122
Other Misc Pantries	241
TOTAL FOOD:	14,043
Hygiene items	6,770
<i>(Totals above are per household)</i>	

Clothing (per piece)	26,142
ID Cards	213
Homeless ID Cards	683
"Reader" Glasses	590
Gas Vouchers (medical)	201
Diapers (per child)	504

Food 4 Kids (2018-19 school year)	
Children served	1,665
Meals provided	95,330

Shelter	
Women	101
Children	73
Men	19

How to Donate

Want to help support Interfaith in the work that we do? Please send a check payable to "Interfaith Emergency Services" at PO Box 992, Ocala, FL 34478, or give securely online at www.IESmarion.org.

*Thank you
for your support!*

From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley



The theme of February is all about love. With Valentine's Day we all focus on our love for our significant others and spouses, but I believe that it has also become a day to remember friends as well. It is our desire that every month here at Interfaith has a theme of love. Our staff and volunteers strive to provide services with love and respect for the individuals we are privileged to serve. When I first came to Interfaith I would often say, "be of the love of Jesus to everyone you serve". I thought this was a good standard to have.

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8

However, I visited another ministry in Asheville, North Carolina a couple of years ago that changed my perspective. There is a church there called Haywood Street and their congregation is made up of many of the homeless as well as people who aren't. This church is very special, and you sense a spirit of compassion and acceptance the minute you walk in their door. I believe what makes this church so special is their standard or "mantra". Theirs' is "see Jesus in everyone you serve". So basically, they don't just try to emulate Christ in their actions but see every person as a reflection of Christ and serve as if they were serving Jesus himself. If you think about it for a moment, that changes things. Where we might be inclined to not go the extra mile to help someone if it's inconvenient or requires a little extra effort, we wouldn't think twice about it if the person we were serving was Jesus. We would fall all over ourselves to make Him feel welcomed and meet His every need. So, I came back from Haywood and shared this experience with my staff and volunteers. It has been such a joy to watch them embrace this new approach to ministry. We are not perfect by any means and don't get it right every time. However, I believe that God sees the efforts and is well pleased because His blessings to us have been abundant since this transition. Imagine if everyone treated everyone else in like-manner. What a different world this would be. It would be Heaven. If you ever have the opportunity to visit Asheville mid-week, feel free to stop in around lunch time at Haywood Street Church. You'll enjoy a dining experience like no other and without a doubt you will be a welcomed guest.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. Corinthians 13:13

Holidays Bring Hope to Shelter, by Michelle Collier, Resident Assistant

What a blessed holiday season for our residents here at Interfaith. The festivities began early in December when the Twilight Cruisers donated toys for our resident children from their annual car show (and provided Interfaith with a \$5,000 check)! We had a huge truck load delivered to our shelter where we set up a Santa shop and let the parents come and pick out toys for their children.

The following weekend we hosted a wrapping party for all of the parents to enjoy hot chocolate, homemade cookies, and Christmas music while they wrapped the gifts. Daphne Gideon, Assistant at Food 4 Kids, made all of the treats and hot chocolate while our Board Member Cindy McKay provided all of the supplies to wrap the gifts.

Special thanks to all the folks that helped decorate the shelter this year – including our devotion leaders Donny and Larry, Linda and Bill Casey. Pastor Sawyer and his group donated gifts of hats, scarves, and gloves. Adam and his daughter from Beast Mode Water Sports provided a Christmas party with gifts for the children and adults. We are grateful for everyone's support to show love and kindness to our shelter during the holiday season.

Elijah, pictured right, is currently living in our shelter. For him, being displaced from your home with your family during Christmas could be a bad experience, but receiving a brand new bike for Christmas was such a blessing for him. The person that donated this bike, and gifts from others, have no idea how it brightened a child's Christmas. Your donation, in whatever form, can mean so much to someone in need. For those wishing to support Interfaith, a monthly donation can insure that our budget has a steady flow of funding all year long. Donations can be mailed to PO Box 992, Ocala FL 34478 or set up online at www.IESmarion.org. Thank you for support and prayers!



Elijah gets his first new bicycle

Special Gifts

In MEMORY of:

In Memory of:
Howard VanDenburgh
By: Ann VanDenburgh
M Lee Arnold
By: Gloria Arnold
Rod Gause
Mr and Mrs O F Gaus
By: Jerry and Teddie Gause
Jim Haselden
By: Bruce Hutchinson
Russell Sands
By: Jane C Sands
Greg McNeal
By: Kathy McCormick
Crawford McGehee
By: Merna McGehee
Dr C Brooks Henderson
By: Dr Edward D Sabol
Mack Dunwoody
Gaye Johnson
Jim Copeland
Alda Sheffield Phillips
E L Foster
By: Ana Dunwoody
Bobby Mathews
Grace Mitchum
By: Palmer Foundation
Bud Gossett
By: Anita Gossett
Mark Fleetwood
Dr Tom Fuller
By: Woody and Rita Clymer

In HONOR of:

Carlyle Ausley
By: Ann Vandenburg
Yvonne (Blue) Montsdeoca
Aleta and Fred Fisher
Mary Alice Atkinson
By: Whit and Diane Palmer
Dr Norman Andrews
By: Kay Marks and Family
Mr and Mrs Anthony Spitek
By: Gregory and Cynthia Rose
Mrs Teddie Gause
By: Jerry and Teddie Gause
Brad and Susan Huennekens
By: Larry and Cathy Huennekens
Trudy Runyan
By: Walter and Virginia Anderson
Our Family
By: Ruthanne and Tim Mizner
Col (ret) and Mrs Daniel Purnell
By: Marie E Sedlak
Evelyn Rogers' Birthday
By: The Lourenco Family
Beverly and John Leaming
By: Richard Chapman
Mr and Mrs Tom Powers
Mr and Mrs Doug LaMay
Mr and Mrs Chris Armstrong
Mr and Mrs Scott Armstrong
Mr and Mrs Wayne Davis
Mr and Mrs Michael Mazzurco
By: Tim and Lou Petty

A Special Gift

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 by email Kayla.Grimmsley@IESmarion.org. Mail donations to PO Box 992, Ocala, FL 34478.

Connecting to Churches

We are so grateful for the relationships we have with organizations, businesses and churches in the community. Those that reach out to us offering a day of service is such a blessing. In this new year ahead, we are looking to strengthen those relationships with the many churches we have in our county. Churches are a great resource to connect volunteers to a ministry here at Interfaith. I myself want to reach out and find those churches that have this desire. If you are involved in and know your church is looking for opportunities like these, please feel free to reach out to me for some ideas on how to help. You can email me at tina.reid@iesmarion.org or call (352)629-8868 ext 210. *Tina*

Many Thanks to...

Special thanks to the following awesome donors for recent food drives (noted in pounds)! Belleview Chiropractic 276; Happy Feet Dance Club 348; Marion County Tax Collector's Office: 824; College of Central Florida: 230; First Baptist Church Ocala: 233 (and 300 pounds of hygiene); KOA Fort McCoy/Lake Ocklawaha: 290; Northside Missionary Baptist: 305; Trinity Baptist: 316; Vanderlaan & Vanderlaan PA: 600 (and hygiene); Custom Window: 309; Church @ the Springs Student Ministry: 553; On Top of the World: 4,029; and Town and Country Animal Hospital: 100.

Additional donations include: Signature Brands: 1200 cans of popcorn; Hollon Homefinders: 20 new blankets; Crafty Christians Countryside Presbyterian: 10 homeless bedmats with fleece blankets; Cheryl Stevenson: 50 Fleece throw blankets; and Fairfield Presbyterian church: \$460.00 of assorted gift cards.



Look what blessing we received! We've been praying for a golf cart for years....especially since we expanded our campus. So grateful to Tim Mizner for his extreme generosity.

Lake Weir Middle and High School collected peanut butter and jelly for the Food 4 Kids backpack program. 93 jars of peanut butter and 63 jars of jelly were collected. Way to go Lake Weir.

Tina and Earle Brooks from the Ocala Jeep Club brought in a large donation of food for the backpack program. We are blessed to have them as one of our very generous donors to Food 4 Kids.

Special thanks to Doc's Restoration for bringing by a ton of toys just in the nick of time to help some very special families.

Special thanks to Wayne and Dennis with Maricamp Church of Christ for repairing all of our picnic tables at our homeless park! (pictured right)





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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.

Legacies of Love

For those of you who have attended in past years you will find this year's event to be surprisingly different. You don't want to miss this event with a secret twist! Tables or tickets can be purchased online at www.iesmarion.org/donate or by check mailed to P.O. Box 992, Ocala, 34478. A list of your guests is requested prior to the event.

High Tea Festival of Tables

Mark your calendar to go to Shalom Park on March 5th to see the beautiful tables for the Ladies High Tea and vote for your favorite. Every vote is a dollar to benefit Interfaith's homeless ministry. Of course, 200 ladies will be lucky enough to attend the tea. We appreciate your support to make this event the best yet!

Finding Joy, by Koy Harris, Intake Manager

Usually when it's time for me to write an article, I ask God what I should say. I don't know who's going to read it, but I figure if you do it's because you get something from our newsletter. This time was no different and He spoke to my heart, "Joy comes in the morning." Today I reflect on exactly what that means for all of us who are connected to Interfaith somehow. How many of us have faced one bad thing after the other? I mean sometimes it seems that there is no end in sight. These things that I refer to as trials and tribulations can make us feel down and depressed and at times, hopeless.

But, the one thing that we should keep in mind is that joy comes in the morning. This means it won't always be like this. It may be raining in your life right now, but the sun will shine again! Whatever you are facing be it sickness, loneliness, financial problems, marital or family problems, don't lose hope! Joy comes in the morning. Your morning doesn't have to be physical as in the AM hours of a new day. Your morning could be in a few hours, the next few minutes, or even the very moment you read this article and decide to let your faith come alive in you! Remember that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28! Don't give up! It's working for your good!

...Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. Psalms 30:5