

Providing Help and Hope for over 36 years, by Tina Reid, Volunteer Coordinator

I have to say, I love my job. Although it can be overwhelming at times, working part time to take care of over 270 volunteers, I am blessed beyond measure to work with and witness the awesomeness of our volunteers. They come from all walks of life, and each brings a unique and wonderful talent to our ministries. And they provide such compassion and love to our clients. When I set up tours for those that are interested in volunteering with us, each person always says they are amazed at how many opportunities we have for them. But yet, I am always amazed at how God brings each person to our door, that fits a need in every department. Recently, we needed someone to manage our facility volunteer group, as the previous gentleman was retiring due to health reasons. And God brought someone to our door the next day. I love that! I get to watch the miracles happen. And you know what? You can too. Volunteering is easy – there's dozens of positions (read Karla's article just to see a small list) and it's typically just 3 hours, one day a week. Each volunteer tells me that they get far more out of volunteering than they feel they put in. If you're interested, give me a call (352-629-8868x210) or check out our website for more information.

In the meantime, we've included some highlights this month of a few of many amazing folks that serve here at Interfaith. We are blessed so much by every volunteer, every day.

Hard-Working Volunteer Glyn, is a True Gift That Will Melt Your Heart

Glyn is currently a volunteer, an average of three to four days a week in the Food Pantry. He started his volunteer position at Interfaith, not long after retiring from Signature Brands in August 2016. Most days, Glyn is responsible for assisting people in need with taking their items to their car and loading them; and receiving donations.

Glyn is also a client with ARC Marion in Community Services. ARC Marion works with and assists individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Glyn lives independently in his own apartment, and considers his position at Interfaith to be his "job" which is one reason he's so dedicated and determined to do a good job every day. The main reason volunteering at Interfaith is of such significance to Glyn is because he genuinely loves helping people, as well as having the need to please his supervisors (Steve and Richard) which is what drives him to do the best of his ability every day. Glyn will do any tasks he is asked to do, works hard throughout his shift and even has to be prompted to take a break. Steve, Richard, and the many other volunteers that Glyn works with, have done such an amazing job making him feel part of the Interfaith family. Being a volunteer at Interfaith has been such a blessing for Glyn. As his Supported Living Coach for almost ten years, I can honestly say Interfaith has had such a positive impact, and it's absolutely the most important part of his daily life. Glyn is a person that thrives from social interaction and staying as active as possible and Interfaith has given him the ongoing opportunity to experience both of those.

Courtenay Salem
ARC Marion, Inc. Community Services



Glyn (center) posing with his buddies, Richard and Steve

From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley



Happy Volunteer Appreciation Month! This is a big deal here at Interfaith because we simply couldn't exist without our volunteers. It takes over 270 individuals each week to make all of our ministries happen and we only have 28 staff, so you can do the math. Our volunteers are literally our workforce. And with their help, we impact many thousands of lives for people in need of help each year. Our volunteers sort canned goods, they repackage eggs, they pack food orders in the pantry, they deliver backpacks to schools for children to take home on the weekends, they do Bible studies and other projects with our shelter residents, they feed our shelter residents, they paint, mow and do repairs on our facility, and they sit down with people seeking help and treat them with dignity as they give them vouchers for various services. At the clinic, they also counsel, treat illnesses, pull teeth and give eye exams. And many more pray, sort clothing and other merchandise, they sweep, they put labels on newsletters, they serve on the board, and they answer phones. Most importantly, they care and show up 7 days a week throughout our various ministries!

To spotlight a particular volunteer is difficult because all of our volunteers go above and beyond. But to give you an idea of the dedication of our volunteers I will share something about one in particular with you. As I was walking through our pantry recently, I stopped to say hello to the volunteers working that afternoon. I met one that I had seen but had never gotten her name. She's been volunteering since 2013 after being a stay-at-home mom for 20+ years. When we bought our medical facility in 2016 and she learned we were going to expand our ministry to medical services, this volunteer got inspired. She went back to school and got her nursing degree so she could also volunteer at the Center for Life! She's very humble and probably wouldn't want me to share that her name is Becky Puckett and she attends Central Christian Church. But I believe in showing honor where honor is due. So this month we celebrate Becky and all of the volunteers out there! Wherever you volunteer, you bring value to our community that is immeasurable, and we thank you. And if you don't volunteer, you are missing a blessing! Even as busy as I stay at Interfaith I still volunteer with some other organizations and a local Rotary Club. Not because I don't have enough to do, but because it feels better than a paycheck and fills a void that nothing else can fill. At the end of this life, all that really matters is the difference we made while we were here. Of course, if you can't volunteer you can always donate! That's pretty impactful too. God bless you all who give of yourselves and your means to make our community a better place.

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10

Food 4 Kids' Volunteer Howard Goes Above and Beyond

The volunteer appreciation award for Food 4 Kids this year goes to the amazing Howard Moore. What a remarkable guy! Volunteering for Food 4 Kids over 9 years, Howard picks up backpacks at 3 schools on the north end of Ocala but guess what, he lives on the west side of the county! Round trip - it is over 60 miles, and takes him over 3 hours each week to pick up at least 50 backpacks which feeds about 175 students! Talk about loyalty to this program, Howard even comes when he is not feeling well. He takes his volunteering very seriously and does not like to miss a week. He began volunteering for his church that was involved with Food 4 Kids, but he only got to help about once a month. Since he wanted to help more, he stopped by Food 4 Kids and asked, "You got something else for me to do?" Well, be careful what you ask for at Food 4 Kids! He started out picking up 5 schools with over 90 backpacks. Then 2 years ago with the help of other volunteers, he now only has 3 schools.

After growing up in Miami and getting out of the Marines, Howard moved to Ocala in 1974. He worked as a prison guard at Lowell Correctional Institute for 27 years. He is married and has 3 sons and 2 grandchildren. In his spare time, he enjoys fishing, playing pool, boating and traveling. His dream is to one day vacation to Alaska. He says the reason he enjoys volunteering is interacting with the people at the schools, coming to Food 4 Kids and joking with the staff. We are so thankful and blessed to have such a selfless, caring and devoted volunteer. We sincerely thank Howard for his dedication to this ministry.



Howard, loading up his trailer

by Karen Fant, Food 4 Kids Manager



Special Gifts

In MEMORY of:

Thelma Kuperberg

By: Robert Kuperberg

Cindy Stafford

By: David Stafford

Diane Andrews

Bill Cochran

By: John and Jarl Hagood

Harold Thompson

By: Walter & Virginia Anderson

Charles Wade

By: Mike and Diane Finn

Marjorie Renfroe

Bill Cochran

Rosie Gee

George Cope

By: Beth and Bill Futch

David Varner

By: Vernon Shukoski

Dennis Geiken

By: Peter and Carol Cobb

Jeanne S James

By: Jesse James

Richard Pittman, Jr

By: Jean Justice

Richard Myers

James Ott

By: Ben and Helen Hayes

Larry Clymer

Jewett Springer

By: Woody and Rita Clymer

Dennis Williams

By: Margie Williams

Ruth Albright

By: Richard and Joyce Adams

In HONOR of:

Jerry F Gause's birthday

By: Teddie Gause & Cammie Gause

Sally Gause

John McLeod

Dr Kelly and Cindy Crase

Dr Norman Anderson

By: Kay Marks and family

Dr Norman Anderson

Mary Britt

By: Judy Chambers

Celine Mack's Birthday

By: Tom and Evelyn Weaver

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.Grimley@IESmarion.org. Mail donations to PO Box 992, Ocala, FL 34478.

Monica brought a wealth of experience to our team. She was especially good at offering support and expertise to struggling moms with children who were disabled or had behavioral issues. Monica said, "I enjoyed everything about Interfaith. The most rewarding, was seeing how truly appreciative everyone was of the services that we provided." Monica moved to Ocala from New York. She brought with her over 11 years of experience working with the developmentally disabled primary through ARC. Monica finished her Degree with the University of Phoenix while volunteering, and January was her last month with us. Monica left to pursue her career passion of working with struggling families who have autistic children. She plans to return when she's not busy, and we can't wait! We feel the effects already of her presence not being here. She's just one example of many, of the compassion and quality of volunteers we have all week long here at Interfaith.

Intake Volunteers are Awesome!

This month's article was difficult because Interfaith has so many amazing volunteers. In the Intake, Boutique, and sorting departments alone, I have over 52 of those awesome people! However, the volunteer that I choose to spotlight is Monica Gonzalez. Monica came to Interfaith originally as an Intern. She was majoring



The lovely Monica

in Human Services with a Family and Child Services certificate. Monica became family to us in the Intake Department. We watched her mature into a great leader before our very eyes. Even after her internship ended, she refused to leave our side. I could call on Monica any day, at any time and she would drop what she was doing to help. She never complained. When asked, Monica said that she chose Interfaith because people who received our services told her how great an organization we were. She knew this would be the place for her because she enjoyed helping people and seeing good being done.

by: Koya Harris, Intake Manager

New Ministry Project Needs Volunteer Groups!

We have a very special ministry we're starting - thanks to our remodeled public bathrooms. These amazing new bathrooms include showers for our homeless friends. We're asking for volunteer groups to adopt a 4th Saturday of the month to help provide soap, shampoo and towels for those that have signed up for hot showers. This will be an incredible blessing for so many! To find out more information about how your group can adopt this wonderful ministry, to truly provide such a great gift, please reach out to Tina Reid at (352) 629-8868 x210 or Tina.Reid@IESmarion.org.

We also have a great need for maintenance volunteers. Are you handy or know someone who is? Interfaith has 9 ministries areas, 8 separate buildings and dozens of ways you can help! Plumbing, painting, mending, changing light bulbs, air filters and all sorts of projects! We have a small crew on Thursdays that meet - but they need more hands! If you're interested, please call Sonya at 352-629-8868x203 or Sonya@IESmarion.org.



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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.

Resident Returns to Volunteer at Interfaith

After spending several months in various medical facilities, I wound up leaving a nursing home with no income and no place to live. I lost my apartment and health care, and had no where to go. I ended up at Interfaith's doors, with a walking cane and a few belongings. I met Michelle, who took me into the shelter and changed my life. They gave me shelter, food, clothing and so much more. They helped me get an ID card (which was lost at the hospital), and supported me as I got back on my feet. I honestly don't know what would have happened to me otherwise. They helped me on the computer so I could do job searches, and even gave me bus passes to get to interviews. Now, I have a job, and live in the Interfaith Supportive Housing Duplex. It's been a year now, and I am also volunteering in the Clothing Boutique, because I wanted to give back and help this organization that helped me. They were there for me when I needed them. I will never be able to repay them for changing my life. I feel like volunteering is my way of giving back and helping others. I am very grateful.

**By: Lisa Dondero,
Former Shelter Resident and Boutique Volunteer**



Thrift Store Volunteer Shares His Heart, by Shannon Pickering, Thrift Store Manager

There's so many wonderful volunteers at the store, and each one has a heart for helping others. I recently spoke with George Tindall, a long time volunteer, and really appreciated what he had to say about Interfaith.

"I have volunteered at the Interfaith Thrift Store for more than 10 years. I didn't know I would stay that long when I started, but when I saw the good the store does for the community, I just kept coming back. At Interfaith, the employees and volunteers start each day by gathering to pray for whoever God sends through our doors that day. From those who donate to us, to those who are looking for a "bargain", to those who have more personal needs, Interfaith shows love to the community and meets those needs. It is the love of Christ in us that we want to share with others."

George Tindall, Volunteer

Today's 'Ruth' is an Inspiration to All, by Holly Bravo, Center for Life Manager

One of our super star volunteers at the Center for Life that we would like to honor is Suzanne Durr. Each week, she arrives earlier than scheduled, performs the daily tasks with sublime detail as well as an illuminating our entire building with her personality. We call her Today's Ruth.

You see, Suzanne has been through several trials and tribulations throughout her life. Canadian born of Quebec, Suzanne alternates between the United States and Canada at six-month intervals primarily due to the health care benefits she receives. One wonderful sense of inspiration was the goal she achieved about 14 years ago, when she lost over 210 pounds. What an accomplishment!

Unfortunately, soon thereafter, she suffered severe health issues that could have caused her to lose life. With great perseverance and dedication, she fought to become healed. "I didn't recover on my own. It was the Lord that healed me". After suffering from cardiac arrest, then an ischemic stroke, there was a reason God saved her. Each day was a gift, not one to take advantage of, rather one to celebrate.

Overcoming these trials has made her even stronger. Today, she currently takes care of her husband that is suffering from dementia. Alone, she bares the smile of her heart with the same dedication she took 19 years earlier on their wedding day. "It's difficult seeing the one you love suffer and not knowing what they are doing one day to the next", Suzanne said. "As long as God is guiding our steps, I know we will be alright. It's one day at a time, that's all it is."

In her spare time, Suzanne finds quiet moments at a local church chapel where she meditates on the Lord and collects her thoughts. She is also very talented in that she crochets and knits masterpieces like the one shown above. Suzanne produces a profound inspiration to each of us in literally taking one day at a time, and not allowing tomorrow's worries to consume us today. We will surely miss her until her next travel brings her back to us.

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In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Acts 20:35



Suzanne, with her crochet American flag

Many Thanks to...

Special thanks to the following awesome donors for recent food drives (noted in pounds)! First Baptist Ocala: 426; Countryside Presbyterian: 291; Ocala West United Methodist: 725; Ocala Police: 135; Ocala Springs Baptist: 387; Oakcrest Baptist: 804; Charles Kiger: 670 pounds of groceries and 156 pounds of jelly; and Van Akin: 87 pounds of ground beef.

We are so grateful to Marion County Community Services and Foundation Services Construction for the remodeling of our public bathrooms. They are beautiful and will be so appreciated by our neighborhood. (Recent ribbon cutting pictured below)



Closetmaid had a food drive for Food 4 Kids and collected over 250 jars of peanut butter and jelly. A big thank you to Kristina Redding (pictured right) and the employees of Closetmaid for this generous donation. The students of Marion County will benefit greatly from your support.



A big thank you to Community Bank and Trust of Florida for their food drive!

Big Blessings in Small Packages

Bless the staff, kids and their families at Small Talk Childcare for their 123lb of can goods. (Pictured below). These little dynamos do a food drive every year for Interfaith, and each year, they each contribute a can or two to make a word picture. We love these little ones! God bless them!



Thank you to The Twilight Cruisers for another donation of food! We appreciate the ongoing support you give us! Karla pictured right with Steve Hawter.



Special thanks to George Albright and his awesome team at the Tax Collector's office! Their recent car show event raised \$5,000 for our Food 4 Kids backpack program! Pictured below.



Yay for United Way's Day of Caring and Advent Health for their volunteer day! What a great group of volunteers! If they take as good of care of their patients as they did Interfaith we are so blessed to have this hospital in our community! Pictured right.

