Sandy’s Story, by Sonya Tyler, Director of Operations

Interfaith occasionally gets rent funds through a special grant, specifically made for those that hit a bump in the road and just need a month to get caught up. Sometimes it’s a car repairs that used their rent funds, sometimes it’s other problems that crop up, but we are here to fill the gap in times of need.

Sandy met with me this week, a single lady that lives alone. As we sat down with her paperwork, we went over her budget to make sure she’s sustainable. Budgeting is one of my big passions that I try to pass on to our clients to help them understand where their money goes. For many, their money disappears, and they have no idea where it went. For some, the idea of needing more income than expenses, is a foreign concept. For Sandy, she had her budget down – it was easy, because there was very little coming in and very little going out. Sandy has a degenerative spine disease and collects $811 disability. She also gets $129 of food stamps. That’s it – that’s what she lives on. She has no cable, no car - she relies on public transportation to get to her medical appointments, and a free no-frills phone. Her rent I learned was $650 a month for a tiny RV in a local RV park. That doesn't leave much money left over. I asked how Sandy gets by each month and she said, “If it wasn't for your food pantry, I would go hungry.” She also went on to say that she visits both our Thrift Store and our Free Clothing Boutique sometimes when the need arises and she’s grateful for a place to come where she can get what she needs.

As we talked about her rent that was due, I could tell she was nervous. I learned that Sandy’s place had been broken into and her wallet stolen, along with her rent money – she even showed me the police report. After I verified everything for her and let her know that I could pay her rent this month, she burst into tears. She was so grateful! She just kept saying, “I don’t know what I would have done!”

Sadly, Sandy’s story is like so many of our clients. For those that seek help here at Interfaith, many are seniors or on disability, and cannot make it without our help each month. Our Intake Volunteers, God bless them, hear their stories every day. And although their hearts break sometimes, like mine did with Sandy, the feeling of seeing their smile when we can offer them help is worth more than gold. Thanks to our donors – we can provide that help. For each can of food, and each check that is written – you help us with every client – and YOU make those smiles happen every day. God bless each of you that give, so that others may be blessed also.

And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Hebrews 13:16

Volunteers Needed! by Tina Reid, Volunteer Coordinator

We have been off to a great start this year with 299 volunteers! Last year, our volunteers helped our community by giving over 18,800 hours of their time combined! The generosity of this community continues to amaze me. We are so blessed to be able to help those in need in so many ways that we need even more volunteers if you can believe that! Currently we are looking for help in our Intake Office, Free Clothing Boutique and Thrift Store. Each position is only 4 hours once a week. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact me at tina.reid@iesmarion.org or (352)629-8868 ext 210.

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

Every February we celebrate the love that certain individuals have for our local community. For the past 7 years we have celebrated people who have left a legacy by doing some extraordinary things in Marion County. Many of you have attended our Legacies of Love luncheons in honor of these special people. For those who have wondered where your invitation is for this year’s event, I want you to know that you haven’t been overlooked! This year we are not having our traditional luncheon. This year we are honoring some very special donors by naming our shelter dorms after them. The honorees this year are Clover Lovell, a very quiet and humble supporter who has honored the memory of her husband, Jeffrey, by supporting our homeless shelter programs in a significant way. We felt that this couple has become such a special part of our shelter ministry that it would be appropriate to name the dorms after them. On February 12th at 4:00 in the afternoon we will have a reception and unveil the signs on the buildings renaming our Women’s Dorm, “Clover Hall” and the Family Dorm, “Lovell Hall.” We will also have a blessing prayed over the dorms and campus, followed by an open house of our dorms. If you’ve never taken a tour and seen the inside of our homeless shelter, this would be a good opportunity for you to learn more about this special ministry that changes lives. Of course we will be receiving donations in honor of our Legacy of Love honorees as we always do but there is no cost to attend. We just ask that you let us know you are coming by emailing me at Karla@iesmarion.org or with a text or phone-call to 352-209-7045.

Speaking of individuals who have been supportive of our organization, sadly we lost two very special donors around the holidays this year. Whitt Palmer Jr. was a very kind and generous friend to Interfaith over the years as well as to many other local charities. Also, Basil Komas was a faithful donor who was adamant that he never receive thanks or praise for his gifts while he was here on earth because he was looking forward to a reward in Heaven. Both of these gentlemen made an impact through their contributions to Interfaith and they will not be forgotten as we rejoice in the reward that they are surely receiving now in the very presence of God. We could have never given them a celebration here that could compare to what they are experiencing now, but will be forever grateful for their help.

His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ Matthew 25:21

Seeking God, by Pastor Bill Bender, Prayer Room Volunteer

I met Paul and Susan about six months ago. They were homeless, needed food and a place to stay, but could not stay in our shelter because it was full. Outside our Prayer Room at the Warehouse, the couple saw all of the slips of paper with answered prayers on the wall. They asked me to pray for them. They commented that they hoped they had as much luck.

I took them into the Prayer Room and we prayed for better times for them; a new job for the Paul, better transportation, a nice apartment and furniture (as they were going to have to sleep on the floor since they had no bed or other furniture). That day, they prayed with me, and accepted a Bible with a promise to find a church and attend.

I recently received a phone call from them telling me everything they prayed for had happened! Paul found a good job, and they soon found a dependable car and even a great apartment! One of our partners, Pay It Forward Outreach, donated furniture for their apartment! The couple said they saw the power of prayer and decided to take care of the last thing they prayed for… a wedding!

Susan remembered I had mentioned I performed weddings for couples in our shelter at no cost. They were so overjoyed about how their lives had improved, they wanted to get married, and have me perform the ceremony as a show of thanks for the prayer with them. And of course I said, “Yes!” Now, on May 22, I will be conducting a wedding in the back yard of their new home!

I see how prayer works every day, and I know God hears all of our prayers. This couple learned it’s not about ‘luck’ but about being prayerfully committed to following the Lord and keeping Christ in their lives. And even better, they now are sharing their story of the power of prayer to others and how it can change lives.

May God continue to bless all who enter our Prayer room and seek God’s blessing. Amen.
In MEMORY of:
Dr Bobby Richardson  
By: Charlotte W White  
  Stanley & Elka Malever  
  John & Linda Parker, Jr  
  Fred & Carolyn Roberts  
  Terry & Cindy Crawford  
  Palmer Foundation  
  MacKay & Scottie Drake  
  Sylvia Casey  
  Judy Chambers  
  Pat Stephens  
  Nicole Millsaps  
  Betty Duernmeir  
  Joan Pierce  
  John & Jarl Hagood  
  Kay Marks  
  “Faith Friends” c/o Mary Dingman  
  Walter & Mara Elliott  

Gerry Fortin Klein  
By: Wade & Vivian Davis, Jr  
Bettye Scott  
By: Wade & Vivian Davis, Jr  
  Dorothy Thompson  
  Judy Chambers  

Dick Marshall  
Lowell Hughes  
By: Wade & Vivian Davis, Jr  
Jerry Cullison  
By: Terry Crawford  
Dr Thomas J Fuller  
By: Andy & Louann DeSantis  
  Sandy Fuller  

Patricia  
By: Deborah Orr  
Thea & Phil Moon  
By: Dorothy Thompson  
Alphonso & Clotelia Lindsey  
By: Virginita Myers  
Cathie & Josh Vibber  
By: Carol Raabe  
Rodney Gause  
By: Tim Shanahan  
Jeanette Bryant  
By: Thomas & Evelyn Weaver  
  John & Jarl Hagood  

Russell Sands  
By: Jane Sands  
Shirley G Ausley  
Larry Starling  
By: James & Shirley S Ausley  

In HONOR of:  
Garris Graham  
By: William & Susan Sewell  
Britt & Joyce Dennis  
By: Geraldine Touchet  
1st Lt Jim Stone  
By: Bruce Hutchinson  
Celine Mack  
By: Keith & Jan Knorr  
Gwen Clair  
By: Janet Rogers  
Sid & Carolyn Varner  
Diane Palmer  
By: Sandy Fuller  
Yvonne (Blue) Montsdeoca  
Mary Alice Adkinson  
Aleta & Fred Fisher  
By: Whit & Diane Palmer  
Phyllis Cohen  
By: Roberta Scott  

In MEMORY of:  
Paul Amato  
Ron Barr  
By: Diane & John Glenn, Jr  
Greg McNeal  
By: Kathy McCormick  
Jack Dudley  
By: Patsy & Jack Harward  
Whit Palmer  
By: Sandy Fuller  
  Gloria & Burton Marsh  
Joel Kuperberg  
By: Robert Kuperberg  
Mary Louise Kerr  
Charles L Kerr (Larry)  
By Janice Owen  
Russell Elliott  
Cindy Stafford  
Keith Bradshaw  
Bob Matthews  
Keith Brown  
Margie Renfroe  
David Tuck  
Bobby Dinkins  
Loujean Price  
By Walter & Mara Elliott  
Anne Tucker  
By: Rudnianyn family  
Howard VanDenburgh  
By: Ann VanDenburgh  

DeSantis Grandchildren:  
Andy, Jr, Rebecca, David & Jodie DeSantis  
By: Andy and Louann DeSantis  

Bob Kuperberg  
By: Kristi Cuza  
  Karla Grimsley  

Many Thanks to...  
For the second year in a row, Hale Products of Ocala had a peanut butter and jelly drive for Food 4 Kids. We received 65 jars of peanut butter and 46 jars of jelly as well as a generous check. You guys are awesome!  

A big thank you to Amanda Miller and the USTA Junior Team Tennis players for the very successful food drive for Food 4 Kids. These tennis players are amazing and an asset to the community. A big win for all of us!  

Special thanks for these donations (in pounds):  

A special thanks to Mark Mader and his small group for the amazing job they did remodelling one of our shelter rooms.
Take the Leap! by Koya Harris-Beard, Intake Manager

Last year whenever I spoke to someone visiting interfaith and they would tell me about their dreams and goals, I would encourage them to just take the leap! We walk by faith and not by sight. So, if we wait until we see something unfold before I eyes, or wait until everything is in place, we'll never go anywhere, achieve anything. God is waiting on us to just take the LEAP! He has all the fine details worked out, your obedience is the missing piece. So what desire or dream has God placed in your heart to do? I dare you to do it! You have what somebody needs.

Kesha is that example. I met Kesha December 2017 and we hit it off instantly, and I asked if she had any goals for the upcoming year. She said “No, but I do have some dreams.” I encouraged her to get those dreams off the paper, out of her head and walk them out. Well last month, she shocked me! She visited Interfaith again and I happened to be filling in as Receptionist and she asked, “Do you remember me?” I replied, “Of course, how could I forget?” In her broken English she said, “I have a surprise for you!” She told me that she listened to my advice, enrolled into CTAE, despite her language barrier and fear of not being good enough and she was coming to give me an invitation to her graduation! I was so overjoyed. Needless to say I cried, and we rejoiced. She is now well on her way to opening her own business where she even plans to give back to her community and to Interfaith. I want to encourage every reader - don’t sell yourself short. Don't count yourself out before you ever get started. You are not too young and you are definitely not too old. Get those dreams, visions, and goals out of your head and into the world to make a difference in somebody's life. And remember, God knows what's in you and trust me if He called you to do it, He's already prepared to make up the difference. There's no better time than now to live out your God-sized dream! I'm rooting for you, take the leap!

Stop and Shop!

Have you been to the Thrift Store lately? There's always new and exciting things hitting the sales floor every day! We're located at 718 N Pine, Ocala and we're open 9am – 4pm Monday – Saturday.