

Alan's Story, by Diane Coleman, Center for Life Manager

Meet one of Interfaith's long time clients, Alan. He has been coming to see us at Center for Life for a while, and we've worked together on his health management.

Alan has been living on the streets, mostly in a camp nearby, for 17 years. When I met Alan several years ago, his health was not good and has continued to diminish over the last couple of years mainly due to the harsh outdoor environment. It has taken a toll on him despite having a team of support around him. Classified as "chronically homeless," Alan has been on the housing list for many years. Due to a very limited income and lack of permanent supportive housing he remained on a long list. We needed to get him into housing that would be affordable and not add more stress to his health.

One day in early July, I received a call from the Marion County Homeless Council looking for Alan. They had funding for permanent supportive housing and Alan was at the top of the list! God works in wonderful ways because Alan was sitting in my office at that exact time. We discussed the fact he is approved for housing and our next steps. We started to look for apartments. We knew which area of town we wanted for him. We put in our request to the Lord and waited.

Two days later, we viewed an apartment in the area we had prayed about! This apartment proved to be exactly what Alan wanted. Walking distance to all the stores and a bus stop right outside his door! There was no doubt that God had put this apartment aside for Alan.

He signed a lease July 6th and moved in right away. He was even able to take his cat Goldie. We were able to furnish his apartment with our Thrift Store and other partner agencies. He was thrilled!

Less than one month after his move, we can already see a marked improvement in Alan's health. He now has all the comforts of home and can start to live his life in ways he never could. When I ask him what he loves the most about being housed he smiles and replies, "being able to eat whenever I want."

What a blessing to be part of God's story for Alan.



Alan proudly holds his key

Food 4 Kids Ready for School

Food 4 Kids is off to a good start for the school year. We are overcoming many challenges but we are committed to feeding students in need. Due to Covid-19 there will be an increase in the number of students fed but we are prepared to meet those needs. With our outstanding community and volunteer support, we are confident Food 4 Kids will thrive like never before. After a crisis there is always a light at the end of the tunnel and we see that light. With God's help, we know this will be a successful year at Food 4 Kids.

Karen

Ft McCoy Food Pantry's 15 Years of Service



Marion Hess and his volunteers at Ft McCoy Baptist Church have been a partner with Interfaith for over 15 years, serving as one of Interfaith's satellite food pantries. Marion retired in August, after serving countless individuals and families in need with love and dedication. Before closing up shop, Marion made sure clients would be able to get services in other local pantries. Thank you Marion for all your years of service! We'll miss you!

From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley



Do you ever wonder how to celebrate your birthday now that you're all grown up, retired, and have everything you need or want? One of our faithful champions for Food 4 Kids did something extra special this year for his 90th Birthday. Bob Kuperberg is a local artist who makes metal sculptures and donates all of the proceeds to Food 4 Kids. I personally own 3 of his pieces and it was such a bonus to feel like I was helping an awesome program while getting some art that I love at the same time. Bob has been doing this for years and has blessed Food 4 Kids with well over \$8,000 through his art. When it came time for Bob's family to celebrate his big birthday, he asked them to do something for Food 4 Kids instead. So his family came up with a plan to do both!

In partnership with our friends at Marion Cultural Alliance (MCA) we did a Backpack Fever event. Similar to the Horse Fever event that created so many beautiful artistic horses around our county, they invited artists to create masterpieces on canvas bookbags. On July 23rd the online auction bidding was closed with an intimate family celebration with Bob at The Brick. So far this event has raised over \$5,600 to support Food 4 Kids and MCA. With the Covid-19 pandemic, this is such a blessing to both organizations which have lost revenue due to the cancellation of our fund-raising events. Congratulations to Bob and his family for a successful fundraiser and an extra special birthday for Bob.

Thank you to Bob and his family and the Marion Cultural Alliance for being such great partners. Also, thank you to many of our other donors who make donations in honor of friends and loved ones by giving a gift to help people in need. We also receive donations from people in memory of lost loved ones which is such a meaningful way to remember them. If you don't know what to give someone, send a check in their honor to P.O. Box 992, Ocala, FL 34478 and they will receive a letter from us to let them know that they were thought of in a way that helped someone less fortunate.

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, [a] when it is in your power to do it. Proverbs 3:27

Hot Stuff, by Sonya Tyler, Director of Operations

As I drove back from lunch, pulling into Interfaith's parking lot, I noticed a young girl on the sidewalk. I could tell she was homeless, as her clothes were dirty and well-worn. She had a simple backpack, which probably held her only belongings. But the thing that I noticed the most, was that she was wearing only a pair of socks. She's not the first person I've seen walking barefoot or in socks, but on a 95 degree day, it was painful to watch. I've recently seen small children walking with their mom without shoes. How awful! And, as I parked my car I thought, "Lord, what can we do to help those without shoes?"

Our Boutique tries to keep shoes in, but to find a matching pair that fit, is a challenge at times. And on that day, we had very little shoes at all – and nothing that would fit her. I briefly mentioned it to a co-worker, and said, "Maybe we can find a resource online for flipflops, that we could purchase and keep around for times like this." So, on the 'to do' list it went.

Did you know that hot asphalt can easily reach 145 degrees or more? And for those experiencing homelessness, they are very susceptible to foot problems. They can frequently get fungal infections and calluses, corns and bunions from the trauma of ill-fitting (or no) shoes. Karla, our CEO has highlighted this problem before, and even started our "Walk a Mile" fundraiser to raise awareness.



The next morning as I walked through our sorting area where donations come in for our Free Boutique, I saw them: 2 boxes of BRAND NEW FLIPFLOPS! I went all over the office telling about the miracle of flipflops! Now, we have probably 50 pair of new flipflops to give out when we see the need. How cool is that?

And think about this - at some point yesterday, God whispered to someone to donate those flipflops. That donor may not even know what a miracle they participated in! And I wish I could thank them in person.

So what's the moral of the story? God can step in when you need Him, even with a pair of flipflops! What can you do to help? Keep donating those gently used shoes – sneakers, work boots, dress shoes, etc.! And if you find a sale on flipflops – all the better!



Bob Kuperberg with all of the auctioned Backpacks

Special Gifts

In MEMORY of:

Sally Williams
By: Delores Owen
Ruthanne & Tim Mizner
Susan & Mike Whalen
Susan Raffa
Don & Carla Denson
Ann Anderson
Cynthia Thomas
T J & Mary Lou Jordan
Gayle Elkes

Buddy Blair
Jim Roland
Fred & Sue Blair
By: Jane Grizzard
Jim Copeland
By: Casius & Gwynn Pealer

Nicky Albritton
By: Sam & Kay Love
Ann Anderson

Mickey Kelly
By: Josephine Foster

David Gamble
By: Patricia Gamble

Dr Ed Anderson
Russel Sands
Dr Bobby Richardson
Sally Claybrook
By: Carlyle & Shirley Ausley

Donald McGregor
By: Mary Barber

Darian Ferguson
Clarence Wigelsworth
By: Ann Anderson

Howard VanDenburgh
By: Ann VanDenburgh
Carlyle & Shirley Ausley

Mable & Bill Staplin
By: Jane & David Staplin

Mack Dunwoody
By: Ana Dunwoody

Arthur Mayer
By: Luann Mayer

Sy Rivers
By: Buddy & Anne MacKay
Charlotte & Carswell Ponder

Anne Marie Donaldson O'Briant
By Julie Moody

In MEMORY of:

Marlene Schumacher
By: Duane Schumacher
Emeline Marsh
By: Karla Grimsley
Scott Grizzard
By: Jane Grizzard

In HONOR of:

Shannon, Bentley & Angela
at Thrift Store
By: Scott Hackmyer
Dr Caroline Collins/
graduation from UCF
By: Nathan & Patricia Gilman
Dr Kristen Skovmand-Wilson
By: Rita & Woodrow Clymer
Robert Kuperberg
By: Ana Dunwoody

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

sanitary napkins, crackers, toilet paper, tissue packs, soap and love. We bought backpacks at Dollar Tree (the ones with the strings) and filled them with socks, razors, shaving cream, deodorant, snack bars, cookies, crackers, toilet paper, tissue packs, soap and love. We made male and female bags. It was such a treat for us to put them together!

In the past, our group had a lot of hands-on and social interaction, but we chat with masks and social distancing. People are so excited for us to get there and share breakfast together. There are picnic tables and coffee provided by Interfaith at the park next to the Warehouse. All the employees try to make it a point to stop and chat with the clients and us. So often the staff doesn't get a chance to just take a moment and chat, because they're usually so involved with helping them and working so hard to solve problems that chit chat is a luxury!

This is so much fun to do - yes a little work, but you can make it as easy as you'd like. It's just so joyful to know that you've taken a few minutes and given them of yourself. The stories you hear about how their homelessness happens are heartbreaking and it's really the work of earth's angels to help them in their plight.

So, if you and your organization or a group of friends want to join in creating smiles and full tummies, please don't hesitate to give Interfaith a call. You'll feel so dang good!

Many Thanks to...

Special thanks to these awesome food drives and donations (in pounds): First Baptist Church, Ocala: 101; First Assembly of God Church: 202; Ameris Bank Rotary Club: 2,000; Center State Bank: 2,203; and College Park Church of God: 106.

Thank you to Sherry Geisler and the Ocala Florida Stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for their donation of over 1,000 pounds

of food to Interfaith! Pictured above is Bruce Reed, Driver, Sherry Geisler, and Steve Clem, Warehouse Manager



Singles Club Serves Breakfast by Barbara Grimshaw, Volunteer

People were milling around in eager anticipation. At nearly 9am, and you could feel the excitement. It was time for Interfaith's breakfast for the homeless. Our group, On Top of The World Active Singles Club (ASC), had the privilege this month. Every month an organization, or any group of people who want to get together and make it happen, bring breakfast down to Interfaith and serve it. It can be something as simple as bagels with cream cheese with coffee and donuts, or it can be as elaborate as you want to make it. We decided we'd go all out! We usually plan for around 55-60 people. Our Committee Leader she requested ASC volunteers to not only make a bagged breakfast of an egg sandwich, fruit, drink and pastry, but to also to make goodie bags. We bought backpacks at Dollar Tree (the ones with the strings) and filled them with socks, razors, shaving cream, deodorant, snack bars,

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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.

We'd be lost without... by Shannon Pickering

Without donors, our store would be empty - no shiny appliances, no beautiful clothes for Karla's Closet, no comfy, cozy furniture to furnish apartments and homes.

Without volunteers, we would be unable to price toys, test electronics, and sort clothing. Each and every donation is processed by our amazing, incredible volunteers.

Without staff, we wouldn't be able to keep the store hopping day to day, schedule the pickups, and keep the finances running smoothly.

Without the upper management, we wouldn't have the day to day guidance, the ministry, the faith based organization that makes me proud to work here.

Without Karla, we wouldn't have a leader based in Christ and the warm blessings that she brings to us.

Without the Board, we wouldn't have the strength and guidance that keeps us going.

When you shop at the Interfaith Thrift Store, there is so much more that you don't see behind the scenes. And all this happens just for YOU! Stop and shop today at 718 N Pine, Ocala. Monday through Saturday, 9am - 4pm.

Happy Retirement Bill!

We recently celebrated the retirement of Bill Rush, our Satellite Pantries Coordinator. He's been a faithful servant to the people on the outer edge of this county for 11 years and he will be greatly missed. God bless you in your retirement, Bill!



Steve, Bill, Maxi, Bruce, Richard and Lamar, the Warehouse crew.