

A New Life for a Great Young Man, by Michelle Collier, Shelter Case Manager

Sometime in February, a new face started coming around Interfaith. James we learned, was a father struggling day to day with homelessness and addiction. Shortly after, his mother and two sons wound up in our Shelter Program. Although they had previously been living together, they separated due to his addictions. It was clear to see that James wanted to be a father to his two sons, but was also fighting to survive himself.

We took time to get to know James and prayed for him. We engaged him more and more each day, discussing his future and goals. We invited him to share dinner with the shelter.

Chris Downing and Jody Schaible, our Outreach Ministry staff, decided to take James under their wings and invited him, along with a few other men, to began a men's bible study group once a week. James made a commitment to change his life for his boys and himself, allowing the Lord to lead the way.

Jody made an introduction for James to a local electrician, and he was offered a job. Even though James was still living in a tent at that point, he was on time each day for his new job.



Chris continued to work with James and enrolled him into his own recovery house program. Here, James must obtain/keep stable employment and abide by the house rules including a curfew, and most important, to stay on his road to recovery.

Today, James is proving himself more and more each day by continuing to build an amazing relationship with his two sons and mother. He is at the same job, doing very well and continuing to work hard in his recovery programs. He even comes to our shelter once a month and cooks dinner for our residents (pictured left).

As I sit back and look at his dedication and progress, I am so proud of James. It took his decision to become a God-fearing man, a role model for his children and heal the relationships and hurt along the way. I am grateful for the dedication and grace given by the staff of Interfaith and most of all our almighty God, who lead James to a new beginning and a new life.

Career Source Provides Blessings, by Tina Reid, Volunteer Coordinator

We all have heard the saying, "When one door closes..." We've all experienced a lot of that recently. Things are not playing out the way any of us were expecting in 2020. But if we look for the little blessings we will find them.

We have been missing our volunteers tremendously. In their absence God has graciously sent us several amazing people to fill in. We are so grateful for Career Source and their grant to help non-profits with staffing. This grant, for people who have been recently unemployed, pays for their positions within our ministry. It has been a huge blessing to have these individuals with us during trying times, for them and for us! Pictured are Kaylynn and Richard who are our new amazing participants in the program and are helping in our Free Boutique and Intake Department!



From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley



This month has been a month for farewells and celebrations. We celebrated a very dear friend, Marion Hess, who served in our satellite pantry at Ft. McCoy First Baptist Church for 15 years. Marion was a dedicated servant and a blessing to the many families out in the Ft. McCoy area. While he will be missed, he will continue to assist His Compassion Ministry which will now distribute food at the church's location on a regular basis. His Compassion is a partner agency that has stepped up to fill in the gaps and meet the needs of those in remote parts of our county. It was such an example of God's provision that they were ready to step in when Marion had to step down. While we will miss this partnership with Ft. McCoy First Baptist Church we are grateful for the many years that they allowed us to be a part of their ministry on the East side of this vast county. We also said goodbye to our long-time staff member who ran 2 of our other satellite pantries (Reddick and Marion Oaks). Bill Rush was a devoted employee who loved the people that he got to share food with each week in those two locations. We will miss his calm spirit and his smile, but wish him all the best. Luckily, everyone isn't leaving us! We just celebrated two other awesome employees, Sonya Tyler and Steve Clem. Sonya is our Director of Operations and has her handprint on so many areas of Interfaith. She quietly works behind the scenes tending to details that we couldn't operate without. From our data collection & technology to facilities maintenance, the newsletter and all things in between, she makes it possible for the rest of us to keep working. For the past 10 years she has been vital to the growth of this organization and we are so grateful for her service. Steve Clem started as our Thrift Store Manager and for the past 4 years has headed up our food distribution ministry. Steve manages the flow of thousands of pounds of food every day in and out of our warehouse to ensure that it ends up where it is needed most...in the homes of our clients. No matter what challenges or far-fetched requests I make of Steve he just smiles and says, "we'll get it done". We are so blessed to have both Steve and Sonya on our team.

On another note, we are grateful to the county leadership and the Community Foundation for rallying support for local non-profits when funds for COVID-19 recovery came down. Because of this, we are able to temporarily hire a hand-full of people to step in and fill in the gaps we've experienced while missing our incredible volunteers. With the uncertainty of the pandemic, we don't want to put any of our regular volunteers in jeopardy by bringing them back too soon, but it was getting too difficult to function without them. With this help we can gradually bring them back as they feel comfortable and not have to reduce our services to clients. With that said, we sure do miss our volunteer family. They truly are the heartbeat of this organization and their smiles and warm spirits are missed more than we can express. Furthermore, no amount of funding could replace what they bring to this ministry. We continue to pray for everyone's safety and look forward to being together again.

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:35

Super Heroes of Interfaith, by Barbara Grimshaw, Intake Volunteer

When I decided to volunteer at Interfaith I actually had little knowledge of what they did, other than a Food Pantry. I had no idea of the expanse their 'arms of love' covered. As time went on, I learned they have a free Clothing Boutique, a homeless shelter, showers and bathrooms for the homeless, and a Food 4 Kids program. Their Thrift Store donates all its profits to the Center for Life where people can get prescription help as well as free counseling. Interfaith's love and giving extend deep into Marion County's overwhelming need.

Besides all that, I want to tell you about the employees and volunteers that I've met there. When I'm a rookie somewhere, I kind of step back, watch and listen, and try to learn as I acclimate myself to a new environment. What I first noticed is that everyone is so full of love there - you can actually feel it. And they like each other too!

These folks just love to help people. I've never seen people get so excited to give money away as what I witnessed during the funding they received for COVID mortgage/rent help! They just could not contain their joy in helping people who had lost their jobs due to COVID and got behind in rent or mortgage payments. When the money became available they were ecstatic and eager to step in and ease those burdens.

There are some emotions that come to my mind when I think about some of the clients that come to Interfaith for help. I think about humility, embarrassment, desperation, anger and humbleness and there are probably many more that apply. Conversely what I see is that people are treated with gentle care, non-judgement, respect, kindness and most importantly love. And sometimes there are people out there that are hard to handle, but I have never seen anyone at Interfaith treat anybody with anything but respect and kindness no matter what was tossed at them. Given all that they do, all that they are, and all that they love at Interfaith, they surely belong to the "Super Hero League" in Marion County.

Special Gifts

In MEMORY of:

Emeline Marsh

By: Timothy & Dorothy Brown

Viresa Grant

Michelle Bourgeois

Howard Goldstein

Friends of Paulette F Beckford

at Advent Health Ocala

James R Gamble

By: Patricia Gamble

Reggie Davis

By: Recovery House

Tilton Boutwell

Harold & Nancy Jones

Jack Anderson

By: Springlake Village HOA

Robert Lockwood

By: Judith Judy

Robert Campbell

By: Shirley Campbell

Ruth Ellsperman

By: Carswell & Charlotte Ponder

In HONOR of:

Robert Kuperberg's 90th Birthday

By: Joan & Andrew Wolf

Wendy & Dana Hall

Cynthia Harding

Phil & Charlotte Rosenberg

Marion Cultural Alliance

Vern Shukoski

By: Ben & Helen Hayes

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.

Many Thanks to...

Thank you to First Christian Church for ongoing donations of food for our pantry. This church is also the home of the "Little Blue Pig" ministry that raises change for our Food 4 Kids Program. Their most recent gift of \$533 is proof that those coins add up and make a difference! God bless you for being such a great partner for many years and hopefully many more. Hazelen Rea, pictured right, has run the program for many years, and is pictured dropping off food donations.

Special thanks to the 3 churches that did food drives for us recently: St. Paul United Methodist Church, First Presbyterian Church and Grace Episcopal Church. With a combined effort they donated over 3,000 pounds in one day!



Thanks for these recent donations (in pounds): Miller & Son's Plumbing: 267; Ocala West United Methodist: 88; Twilight Cruisers: 254; College Park Church of God: 164; and Alpha Pure Spring Water: 16 pallets of water

Thank you once again to Maricamp Road Church of Christ for hosting our Neighborhood Breakfast recently! Pictured left.

Amazing Grace, by Diane Coleman, CFL Manager

This past summer we were blessed to have an intern, Grace, from John Hopkins University working with us. Because of COVID, her work was limited to a project she could work on off-campus. At the Center for Life, we always have projects but time limits us. Grace showed up at exactly the right time!

My plan was an informative booklet for our diabetes clients since we could not have classes (due to COVID). I shared with Grace my vision of how I wanted the booklet to look. Grace took my ideas home and started work. She came back to the office after a week and had the most amazing draft for review! Not only did she listen to my vision, she created exactly the ideas I had in my head. Her booklet blew me away with the detail and amount of information she had placed in it. She included pamphlets on diabetes, methods to manage depression, weight factors and frequently asked questions. Grace also created an Intake form and tool for us to help establish goals for their disease management.

After Grace completed the project of 80 hours, she asked if she could just stay and volunteer. I had to hug her immediately! She worked with us 3 days a week and she was an absolute joy to have with our team. Grace had to leave us at the end of July to go back to school in Baltimore. However, her legacy will continue to be here with us at CFL. We will miss her tremendously. So, when I say Amazing Grace, I refer to our amazing intern, Grace, who will make one amazing Doctor!

GIVE 4 MARION Make sure you join us during GIVE4MARION on October 20-21, from 10am-10am. This special day is set aside for Marion County residents to give to their favorite charities! We're encouraging our friends and neighbors to give online that day on our website at www.IESMARION.ORG or mail a check to Interfaith, PO Box 992, Ocala, FL 34478. Thank you in advance for your support! We couldn't do it without you.



IES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Craig Baggs
Brittany Beall
Steve Christopherson
Quinette Durkin
Winn Keeton
Cindy MacKay
Paulette Millhorn
Nick Nikkinen
Anne W. Parker
Lisa Sheilley, Secretary
Vernon Shukoski
Carlos Tobon, President
Wesley Wheeler
Karla Grimsley, Chief Executive Officer

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.

Farewell Howard, by Karen Fant, Food 4 Kids Manager

It is with a heavy heart that I write this article. Food 4 Kids suffered a great loss recently as former volunteer, Howard Moore went home to be with the Lord in August. Each week he would cheerfully pick up about 50 backpacks at North Marion Middle School, Reddick-Collier and Fessenden



Elementary Schools. It was about 80 miles round trip for him each week but he always said it was the highlight of his week. After unloading the backpacks from his trailer he was happy to help other volunteers, always smiling and joking around as he worked. He received a community Outstanding Volunteer Award in 2019. Howard served Food 4 Kids for 20 years and will be greatly missed.

Turning Pennies into Blessings, by Shannon Pickering, Store Manager

Help comes in all shapes and sizes - sometimes it's housing assistance, sometimes it's just a word of kindness. This week, one of our persons experiencing homelessness came into the store. He was hot, tired, and frustrated. He had a bag of pennies, around \$5 worth and there was not a convenience store that would cash them in. You see, our friend wanted to wash a load of clothes and needed quarters. Laundromats usually do not have an attendant working and even if they did, \$5 in pennies is impossible to keep in a cash drawer at any given time. As I counted out five dollars in quarters, I was grateful that God put me in such a place to be able to help this man with a seemingly small thing to me, but very large and important to him. Don't be so busy in life that you forget to hear what God is trying to tell you.