

From Tragedy Comes Healing, by Volunteer Diane Anderson

My name is Diane. In 2016, I went from living a very quiet, simple life, to making a reckless decision that changed my life. I was employed with Marion County Postal Service for 18 years, with a clean driving record. I went to the gym, church, work and spent time with my children and grandchildren.

On one fateful night, I attended a Bunco fundraiser event for Breast Cancer. It was lots of fun playing Bunco, lots of laughing women and wine. I knew I felt impaired, but I foolishly thought I'd be ok to drive home. I made it almost home but knew I hit something in the dark. I arrived home and saw my windshield cracked on the corner. I knew I had to go back and see what I hit, praying it was a mailbox or tree limb. When I saw emergency vehicles on the shoulder of the road, I knew it was my fault. I learned I had hit a woman on a bicycle. I was arrested for DUI and leaving the scene of an accident.

I absolutely know God had been watching over me and the victim that night. She only suffered a small cut on the back of her head and bruises. I went to jail, but God continued to use me through the experience. I was even able to share Christ with women in jail, and together we went to devotionals and pray together. When I was released, I got a job, and started rebuilding my life.

Next, I had to complete 80 hours of Community Service. I chose Interfaith Thrift Store and I worked every Saturday for about 3 months to complete all my hours. During that time, I developed a great relationship with Shannon Pickering, the Manager. She is a wonderful leader to her staff and the volunteers. We also started going to church together. I subsequently developed a "second family" with all the other Saturday volunteers. I didn't want to quit, so I became a volunteer. I try to volunteer at least two Saturdays a month. I love that we gather and pray before the doors ever open. It is such fun, it's great to help others, and show God's love to customers. I love the camaraderie there.

I met the young lady from the accident some time later and learned she's a now Vet Assistant. We talked and cried, and I know God brought us together for a reason. I am living proof that God can take our mistakes and make something good out of it. I have the best life and am happier than I've ever been. If I had not made that mistake, I would not have this life I love!

Finding a Friend at the Boutique, by Kaylynne Crane



Since I started working in the Boutique, I have met the most amazing people! I love having that one on one personal experience with people from all walks of life! A lot of the people that come visit me in the Boutique are homeless or have fallen on hard times and I want to brighten their day and help them get clean clothes and shoes. And it makes me extremely happy to help people! I have also worked really hard to decorate, organize and make the Boutique feel homey and welcoming. It's super

important to me that I give them a great experience in their day!

I also want to introduce you to one of our clients, James. He brightens up my day most every time I see him! His smile makes my whole day when he stops in the Boutique. He is always so nice and tells me to have a blessed day. He says stopping in the Boutique is the highlight of his day, and that gives me such a fantastic feeling to know that I have made a positive impact on his life. I wish nothing but the best for James and I hope God gives him many great blessings! He will always have a place in my heart and be considered a friend to me! And here at Interfaith, that is what we strive for!

Follow us!

Do you follow Interfaith on Facebook? We keep the community connected to our events, happenings and blessings! You'll see posts about community members that help with food drives, and videos with our clients that are touched by your generosity! And if you're a fan of our Thrift Store - make sure you connect with their page too! Shannon does an amazing job of posting hot new items that come in, or even just inspirational quotes to brighten your day!



From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley



God always opens a window...

During the COVID19 crisis our Thrift Store lost our truck-driver who goes out and picks up the donations of furniture and other household items. Of course this severely impacts our inventory and ultimately our sales at the store. For those of you who don't know, the Interfaith Thrift Store located at 718 N. Pine Avenue is the funding source for our Emergency Prescription Medication Program. This program assists people of low-income and without insurance to ensure that

they have life-saving medications. As it happens so many times here at Interfaith, when a door closes God opens a window. Anne Parker, board member and resident of On Top of the World is a champion for Interfaith in that community. She and her husband, Gordon, started receiving phone calls from the family members of people in the community whose loved-one had passed away and they needed help dealing with the belongings left behind. Because they also work with Vets Helping Vets, they picked up a couple of loads with the help of their neighbors Charlie and Fran Calhoun and donated the items to assist the veterans. Quickly the small storage space at the Vets Helping Vets office filled up and they continued to get calls. Once the word got out that they were available and willing to help realtors were calling with truck-loads of donations. Luckily for Interfaith Anne knew that our Thrift Store could benefit and so the donations were picked up and taken to Interfaith. In fact, the Interfaith homeless shelter received 2 very nice leather sofa's because of their efforts! This couldn't have come at a better time. This is just one more example of how God always steps in and finds obedient and willing people to do his will and bless others when we need it most. We owe the Parkers and the Calhouns a big thank you as well as the On Top of the World Community which has been a strong supporter of Interfaith for many years. God bless you for helping us help others!



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Advocating for Our Clients, by Diane Coleman, Center for Life Manager

This July we restarted the client advocacy program at the Center for Life. The purpose of this program is to assist clients with local and state benefits, which could include SNAP and/or Social Security benefits such as SSI and SSDI.

Many of our clients qualify for benefits, however, the process for applying is sometimes frustrating and challenging for them. Having someone to help advocate during times of stress helps them in so many ways. Sometimes our clients need help reading legal mail or just interpreting for them.

Many clients need basic items like a replacement SS card and that sounds simple, but with COVID, things have changed and offices that once were open are now closed. All communication is now by phone, and many don't have a phone, so our advocates come to the rescue.

We have served 64 clients in the short time we have been advocating for them. It's so rewarding to know we can help people get these services they once had or had tried to get themselves without success. We are blessed to be able to provide the extra help for our people that we serve and love.

Thankful for Our Volunteers, by Tina Reid, Volunteer Coordinator

Entering the month of giving thanks we have so much to be thankful for. This month I am especially thankful for the flexibility of our volunteers. We have had so many changes happening this year. Our volunteers have been so gracious in dealing with us asking them to stay home, then to come back, then again asking them to hold off. Asking them to put our old processes on the shelf and pick up completely different ones, and then changing them yet again. We all know the healthcare workers are going through constant changes in protocol, but who knew volunteers would be in the same boat! Some of our faithful Warehouse volunteers pictured right.

Thank you for being resilient and beneficent. We pray blessings over you daily!



Special Gifts

In MEMORY of:

Sally Williams

Nan Deen

By: Traci Heinrich

Walter & Mara Elliott

Edwin & Lillian Updike

Millie Shashy

By: Frank & Pamela Stafford

Elizabeth Wray

Kay Marks

Terry Crawford

Sy Rivers

By: Traci Heinrich

Ruthanne & Tim Mizner

Terry Crawford

Walter & Mara Elliott

Paul Kimbrough

Dr Lloyd Steinberg

Oscar (Bubba) Lott

By: Elizabeth Wray

John Martin

By: Robert Kuperberg

Dr Bobby Richardson

By: Elizabeth Wray

Ed & Betty Cluster

Mollie Massey

By: Ed & Betty Cluster

Arthur Demer

By: Patricia Gamble

Art Nussell

By: Terry Crawford

Dr Ed Anderson

By: Elizabeth Wray

Walter & Mara Elliott

Millie Massey

By: Edwin & Lillian Updike

Clarence Wiglesworth

By: Elizabeth Wray

Walter & Mara Elliott

Russell Elliott

Pat Ball

Darian Collins Ferguson

Russell Sands

Sally Claybrook

Anne Marie Donaldson O'Briant

By: Walter & Mara Elliott

Alice Brooks

By: Springlake Village Community

In MEMORY of:

Mickey Kelly

By: Bette Leeward

Marilyn Allsopp

By: Gloria & Burton Marsh

Robert Dedrick

Thomas "Tommy" Perkins

By: Harmonelle Perkins

Cheryl Banker

By: Carri Scott

John Dawson

By: Loretta Dawson

Carol Emmett

By: Barbara Schwartz

In HONOR of:

Russel & Mary Dingman

By: Tim S Shanahan

Jennifer DeHogan

By: Charlotte & Ronald Rozanski

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.

So Grateful...

God has blessed Interfaith with so many amazing community partners. One of our favorites is FreeDOM clinic. FreeDOM clinic provides free dental and optometry services to people of low-income without insurance in our county. Once upon a time these services were just a dream for those who couldn't afford them. And then God sent this wonderful organization to end suffering and enhance the well-being of so many with these particular needs. We are honored that they now provide free dental services every week in our Center for Life. Thank you FreeDOM clinic for your dedication to help and healing, and thanks to God for providing this space we call the Center for Life where these vital services can be offered.

Interfaith is grateful for another year of partnership with the Marion County Hospital District. The MCHD has renewed our grant-funding for another year to provide prescription medication assistance to individuals suffering with diabetes and mental illness. Together we can make a difference for our fellow Marion County residents.

Many Thanks to...

Special thanks to these awesome food drives and donations (in pounds): The Villages Health: 1,108; First Assembly of God: 493; Pathways Pharmacy: 33; Ocala West United Methodist: 44; and St Matthews Lutheran Church & Summer Glen: 838 pounds of food & items for shower ministry. Also thanks to Clover Lovell: \$542.40 from Walmart various items needed for the shelter; and Vicki J Goodsell: 15 bags of crochet blankets, shawls & hats

For her school project, Jesmine made 100 bags of healthy snacks for our homeless friends - she even wrote encouraging notes on the bags. Thank you Jesmine for such a sweet gift!



Carol & Ernie Brandes (pictured below) presented Food4Kids with a check to help cover the cost of the new backpacks for their host school. They are members of the Corvette Club of Marion County who, along with three other couples from the Club, volunteer to deliver the food to Harbor View Elementary School in Summerfield each month.



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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.

The Broken Cross, by Pastor Jody Schaible



A few years back, my son went on a field trip with his class to St. Augustine. He brought back gifts for all of us in our family. My gift was a green emerald stonelike cross that he was so proud of buying that I strung it with some twine and started wearing it. I received many compliments about it and I was always very proud to say he picked it out himself.

A few years later I was helping a friend move and the cross broke. The lower half of the cross snapped off leaving what almost looked like an anchor, but clearly was a broken cross. I felt bad that I broke the cross my son gave me, yet it still had an immense amount of value to me. Then it hit me, it's not the cross itself that has value but what the meaning of the cross means to me. Almost every day I hear, "Excuse me, your cross is broken." I stop and thank God for this moment and then I will ask them, "Is it?" It's not the cross that holds the power, It's the love that came with it and the pain when it broke. Now I use it as a pathway to open conversations about my God with our distressed friends. God gives us these moments of joy and sorrow so we can worship him and thank him daily for our opportunities to witness his glory.

Tina to the Rescue!

Interfaith was the recipient of a COVID grant from the Community Foundation, which paid for a part time staff for Food 4 Kids! We were fortunate to be able to hire volunteer, Tina Viglione. Tina has helped pack backpacks for 7 years. Tina said she's met a lot of nice people and it is rewarding to help others and is thankful for this opportunity. Food 4 Kids is grateful for the Community Foundation and Tina.



Karen