

## Heartbreak Provides Hope, by Chris Downing

Only God has the power to use something heartbreaking and change it to something incredible. This story starts in August. We found one of our beloved homies dead from an overdose in a tent. I knew him and it was a stark reality of the struggles that go on with the homeless population. He hadn't been in Ocala very long; but his struggle with addiction took his life. This was very sad for us as advocates, for we know there is hope and help in our community. Four months later, I see a young man alone, separate from everyone else outside our gates at Interfaith. He stood most of the day in the same spot. God, through his Holy Spirit, nudged me to go over to speak to the young man. I am glad I did. His name was Steven. After speaking briefly with him I could obviously see he was stressed, filled with anxiety, frustration, and sadness. Steven and I walked back to the office and we began talking more, as I determined how we could meet his needs. He was just released from prison. I was able to get him food and some clothes.

As his story unfolded before me, I realized it was Steven's Dad who had died in August, alone in a tent. Out of his eyes came much sorrow and sadness, which brought tears rolling down his cheeks. He said, "I don't want to end up like my dad. I found out while I was in jail, he passed away from an overdose."

I consoled him and we began to talk about God. Steven told me about his own addiction to drugs. We began to speak of Jesus. There Steven accepted Christ and became child of God. He is saved!

Through our outreach funding Interfaith was able to purchase him a bus ticket so he could be reunited with his family in South Carolina. He has kept in touch. Steven is now home. He is still sober, working, going to church, and enjoying life again.

*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28*

## Duplex Residents Volunteering at our Thrift Store

Where do your donations go when they are dropped off at Interfaith Thrift Store? Most of the time, our gently used donations are resold in the store at affordable prices to our amazing community. But what happens when we have an overwhelming amount of items and not enough space? This happens often with shoes. We get an incredible amount of shoes sometimes, but have a limited area for display. The Thrift Store has always partnered with Interfaith's Free Clothing Boutique located at our main office,



to provide solid, sturdy walking shoes for our homeless friends. Two of our duplex resident volunteers, Tina and Stacy (pictured left), come into the store twice a week to sort and band together the incredible amount of shoes donated to the store. The shoes are then processed to the showroom floor or to the free boutique. The hours that these ladies put in is invaluable. We are so grateful for their service and dedication to our program at Interfaith. Stop by our store at 718 North Pine to see what our loyal volunteers and staff have waiting for you today!

### Clients Served Jan - Dec 2020

*All numbers are affected by  
COVID closures and precautions*

Food (Ocala)	13,245
Outreach (food):	
Marion Oaks	1,968
Reddick	908
Fellowship	334
Ft McCoy	436
Other Pantries	184
<b>TOTAL FOOD:</b>	<b>17,075</b>

*(Totals above are per household)*

Clothing (per person)	9,110
ID Cards	114
Homeless ID Cards	774
"Reader" Glasses	459
Gas Vouchers (medical)	160
Diapers (per child)	265

Food 4 Kids (8 mns total)	
Children served	1,387
Meals provided	148,670

Shelter	
Women	64
Children	32
Men	5

### 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](http://www.IESmarion.org).

*Thank you  
for your support!*

## From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley



Welcome 2021 and hope for an end to the pandemic! I want to use this opportunity to give an update and share our tentative plans for this year. Obviously, we will not be holding our annual Legacies of Love event this year in February. While this is generally an event held around Valentine's Day we may attempt to schedule it for later in the year. Currently, the Brick City Beer & Wine Festival (that benefits Interfaith, Kimberly's Center for Child Protection and the Marion Literacy Council) is scheduled for April 3, 2021. We have high hopes that the Rotary Clubs will still be able to host this event but stay tuned as nothing is set in stone at this point and we are pretty sure there will be limits on the number of people allowed to attend. Likewise, I hope to hold the annual Interfaith Ladies' High Tea but it will most likely go back to how it started, as an outdoor event, the end of March or early in April. Likewise, we hope to be able to schedule the Walk a Mile in My Shoes event as it wouldn't be until September and with it being an outdoor event, we should be safe to move forward

with that one! If you are feeling the need to do something and shake off the "quarantine blues" from 2020, consider joining one of my event planning committees! I can always use help planning and holding these events and it's a short-term commitment which ends when the event is over. Also, we plan to participate in the Give for Marion online giving event for those who aren't interested in attending fundraising events but still want to show support through a collective effort. That event will be in the Fall.

On the home-front, we continue to serve the community with food, shelter, clothing, medications, case management, counseling services, and other assistance for basic needs. As long as you are there backing us with financial, prayer and in-kind support we will be here serving people in need. Finally, I want to thank you for the many sweet and thoughtful notes mailed in and comments added to your donations to encourage us. Please know that the few minutes you take to put your appreciation in writing to us....even if one line....means so much! We feel your love and support and do our best to pass that on to the people we serve as it's truly YOU that are making it possible for us to help them. Let's remain united in our love and compassion for our fellow man. If God be for us, who can be against us?

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:35-39*

## Every Volunteer is Priceless, by Jody Schaible, Facility Manager/Campus Pastor

Recently we had a problem with a shed that was donated several years ago. The door was falling off the hinges, there were various leaks (which caused wood rot) and other problems. Enter Super Dave, our extraordinary volunteer and his pal Frank.

The dynamic duo took off the whole front of the building, built an entire new door and window (both of which were donated). They repaired the vinyl siding and even made an over-the-door awning.

Dave has been instrumental in so many projects through the years. Several years ago, he and Frank built our donation clothing box, which is still going strong.



Dave is one of our regular volunteers that gives of his time every week for our Facilities Department. He's a joy to work with and we are so grateful for his time and talents. His talents are priceless to us - they save us thousands of dollars by not having to hire companies to do the work.

Have some free time and want to help? You don't even have to be super-handy - just willing to give of your time a couple hours a week. Call Jody for more



**The Duo - Frank and Dave** information at (352) 644-9198

# Special Gifts

## In MEMORY of:

John Brass  
By: Shannon Sheridan  
Steven Mortimer  
James & Peggy Raesler  
John Moore  
Jo & Ken Alexander  
Terri & George Brass  
Ronald & Barbara Brown  
Klaus & Lucile Bauer  
John Schaeffer  
Marsha Norberg  
David Gantz  
Thomas & Marcia Geary  
Mr & Mrs George Flanigan  
Linda Brass  
Patricia Voss-Werner  
By: John & Carolyn Fritz

Edith Parker

By: Rhonda Parker

Joe Simmons

Tom Falvey

By: James & Katherine Yancey

Marilyn Allsopp

By: Dorothy Glanzer

Susan Greiner

Bernard Shelnut

By: Bradford & Sandra Bobbitt

Nick Nikkinen

By: Sarah Bruner

Susan Greiner

Gail & Vern Shukoski

Mickey Kelly

By: Judy Saxon

Robert & Mariann McClary

By: Amanda McClary

Becky Nation

By: Bette Leeward

Charlotte & Carswell Ponder

Hunter Bowen

Susan Greiner

Harry & Evelyn Dannels

By: Lois Dannels

Dr Ed Updike

By: Hunter Bowen

Mary Miale

By: Karl & Carol Raabe

Kenneth Vande Wattering

By: Ben & Helen Hayes

Charles & Juanita Murray

By: Robert & Miriam Murray

## In MEMORY of:

Mary Louise Kerr

By: Janice Owen

John & Ona Everly

By: Patricia Gamble

Sally Williams

By: Hunter Bowen

Deborah Cone

Greg Graham

By: Jack & Harriet Knight

Bernice Wheeler Baxter

By: Charlotte Erickson

Mack Dunwoody

Whit Palmer

By: Ana Dunwoody

Patrick Lukas

By: Virginia & Bruce Drake

Deceased Glenn Family

By: John & Diane Glenn

Greg McNeal

By: Kathy McCormick

Rose & Ray Negron

By: Mary Chang

Edith Parker

By: Rhonda Parker

Our Mother

By: Deborah Orr

M Lee Arnold

By: Gloria Arnold

## In HONOR of:

Dr Stephanie Cortes

Rod McGinnes

Dr Rob Wolf

Dr Charles McIntosh

By: Jennifer Fryns

Beth & Richard Arndt

By: William & Janet Brueckner

William & Janet Brueckner

By: Beth & Richard Arndt

Judy Rhodes & extended family

By: Arthur & Luann Mayer

Gene Diamond

By: Bruce Hutchinson

Joan Koenig

By: D Keay & Rhea Forman

Melinda & Tony Spitek

By: Gregory & Cynthia Rose

## In HONOR of:

Beth & Craig Cannon

Alice & Harris Cannon

Lucy Cannon

By: Chris Richardson

Fort King Presbyterian

Women's Esther Circle

By: Christine Berryhill

William & Lynn Hagner

By: Nearous Sizemore

Nancy & Al Ott

By: Tara Mauldin

Doug & Pam Vanderbilt

By: Mary Hoagland

Wilma Andrews

By: Mac & Becky Andrews

## 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](mailto:Kayla.Hess@IESmarion.org). Mail donations to PO Box 992, Ocala, FL 34478.

**There is no better time** to make a resolution to get more involved in your community. We have **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES** available. Contact Tina at [tina.reid@iesmarion.org](mailto:tina.reid@iesmarion.org) or 352-629-8868 x210.

## Many Thanks to...

Special thanks for these food donations (in pounds): Hardwood Trails POA: 54; Ocala West United Methodist: 4,761; Ocala 200 Lions Club: 191; First Baptist Ocala: 99; Brick City Church: 223; Florida Credit Union: 519; Center State Bank: 312; Spruce Creek North: 734; Vanguard HS Key Club: 1,116; Ft King Tennis Club: 370; Max Air: 740; and Oak Run Upper Midwest Club: 961 (pictured below).

Other notable donations:

ESP Solutions & Chili Cats: 550 Masks; Jenny Bates: 150 pair socks and assorted clothing and blankets; Crafty Christians: 14 bed mats and Silver Springs Shores Republican Club: 52 tins of popcorn.



Special thanks to Ann Marie Stanley of Marion Landing. She stops by every month to drop off donations collected in her community! We appreciate your support!

Thank you to Robert (Bob the Barber) Gentry for coming out and giving our friends free haircuts! Thank you for your kindness. Robert pictured right, giving Tomas a haircut.





P.O. Box 992 • Ocala, FL 34478

*Return Postage Requested*

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Check out our website at  
**[www.IESmarion.org](http://www.IESmarion.org)**



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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

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*Interfaith Emergency Services is a community of faith called by God to offer emergency assistance without judgment to all persons in Marion County.*

### **God's Nudging, by Shannon Pickering, Store Manager**

Do you listen to all of the whispers and nudges that God provides to you on a daily basis? When He tells you to turn left, do you turn right? Jody Schiable, our Campus Pastor, was working at our main campus and felt like he needed to stop what he was doing and come to the store to get a backpack for a client. As Jody and I were looking for his items, he turned around to see smoke and flames shooting out of our forklift! Jody and store volunteer, Champ Edelmann rushed to get a fire extinguisher and quickly put out the flames. Surely, God had placed both of these men in the right place at the right time to assist us in our moment of need. Where is God nudging you?

Speaking of our forklift, it's been busy unloading so many great things for the store! Stop by and see us at 718 N Pine, Ocala, Monday – Saturday, 9am - 4pm.

**Burlington's "Delivering Good" Coat Drive** was a huge success! Hundred of our friends who are experiencing homelessness received warm jackets! We also received hats, gloves, scarves, throws and quilts (many of them hand-made beauties!) It was an incredible blessing to pass along a warm items for our homeless friends! Despite COVID fears and anxieties, you faithfully supported us through donations of these items and money to purchase what we didn't have. Thank you so much. Pictured are one of our grateful recipients!



### **We have Openings!**

Interfaith has openings! We currently have a couple of seats open for new Board Members. If you've ever been interested in serving on our governing board, please contact our CEO, Karla at [Karla@iesmarion.org](mailto:Karla@iesmarion.org).

Also, we've been blessed with the funding to hire a second Mental Health Counselor. If you or someone you know feels called to this specific ministry opportunity please contact our Director of Ministries, Jessica Rodriguez at [Jessica.Rodriguez@iesmarion.org](mailto:Jessica.Rodriguez@iesmarion.org). We also have a position open at the Thrift Store for an experienced Merchandiser – please also contact Jessica.