

## **This Month we Celebrate our Volunteers!**

*Thank you to all our volunteers that have been with us through thick and thin. We appreciate your flexibility, understanding and generosity. For those that can't be with us, our hearts will not be complete until you are back working with us again. Wishing many blessings as we take this month to reflect on our appreciation for you!*

*Tina Reid, Volunteer Coordinator*

## **Shinning the Light on Volunteers at the Thrift Store, by Shannon Pickering, Manager**

Without our volunteers, the clothes would not be sorted, the shoes would not be matched, and the pillows would not be fluffed. These are all items you can see and purchase when you come into the Interfaith Thrift Store. What you don't see are all the hours put into these small tasks; the residents who sit in the warehouse for 6 to 10 hours weekly sorting through huge piles of shoes and matching them in pairs for easier processing; volunteers who come in for one shift per week and check buttons and zippers to make sure you get a high-quality clothing product; the people who come in and organize the pillows by color so the floor display is neat and attractive.

What you also don't see are the volunteer hours put in by our Thrift Store Committee Members, some who serve on the Interfaith board, some who are dedicated to making our Thrift Store a better place to shop. These members do not get paid for the time, heart, and passion they put into Interfaith.

It goes without saying that Karla Grimsley, CEO of Interfaith and Jessica Rodriguez, Director of Ministries, oversee the large scale operations that affect the day to day business at the store. These ladies are the force that drives Interfaith and leads the store into the future. It's their leadership that helped form our volunteer committee. Those awesome committee members are:

>>> **Wes Wheeler** has been the heart of the committee, serving for many years at the store before I started and continues to encourage and support the staff as he stops in to visit several times weekly.

>>> **Scott Hackmyer** is the biggest advocate of the store having seen it grow and flourish over the years. He stops by on a regular basis to check out the donations and ensure the store is up to par.

>>> **Cindy McKay**, former IES Board President, is our head cheerleader and one of our biggest fans! She sends us donors and encourages us to keep looking at the bigger and better picture!

>>> **John Bradish** with a background in logistics is on board to advise and help us better plan pick-ups in the future.

>>> **Quinnette Durkin** stops by when she is in the area, and helps with tagging clothing.

>>> **Shannon Roth** of Shannon Roth Collection downtown who not only gives us incredible donations from her showroom but is a gentle reminder of what we can do.

Each one of these people encourage us in different ways, offer their time and experience to make 718 North Pine a better place. I feel blessed to have each one of them here and offer my sincere, heartfelt thanks to each one for the unique experience they bring to me.



**Quinnette and Shannon**

## From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley



This month we celebrate our incredible volunteers. One of the best things about volunteers is that they make great employees too! We've learned this over and over through our Food 4 Kids Program. So when Karen Fant, previous volunteer turned manager, recently retired we weren't surprised to find another dedicated volunteer to step up into the role. While we are so sorry to lose Karen as part of the staff, she will long be remembered for the special touches she put on the program. Under her meticulous direction the program was able to add additional vegetables to the weekly bags as well as adding back a good source of milk that was transportable. Most importantly she worked so well with and valued our dedicated volunteers. But just as she started with Food 4 Kids as a volunteer she found another volunteer just as passionate about the program to follow in her shoes. We welcome Delores Bulgin as the new Manager for the beloved Food 4 Kids Program. But this kind of transition is more common than I realized. I started taking inventory of

how many of our current staff came to us as unpaid volunteers and it occurred to me why our team here is so incredible. People come to volunteer out of the sheer goodness of their hearts and for their personal love and concern for their fellowman. So it just makes sense that people who are willing to come and give freely of their time and talents make exceptional staff members. So this month my hat is off to those volunteers who came to dip their toes into the service pool at Interfaith and decided to take the plunge into becoming a part of the team every day. These are the permanent Interfaith employees who started as volunteers:

Michelle Collier – Shelter Case Manager  
Shannon Pickering – Thrift Store Manager  
Darla Cowen – Prescription Grant Administrator  
Tricia Pedrick – Prescription Grant Administrator  
Daphne Gideon – Food 4 Kids Assistant  
April Gibson – Shelter Housekeeper  
Ashley Webber – Shelter Housekeeper  
Jeffrey Downs – Food Distribution Truck Driver  
Kathy Dunston – Thrift Store Assistant  
Gloria Cribben – Housing Case Manager  
Kevin Rhaney – Satellite Pantry Coordinator  
Angela Kinney – Shelter Resident Assistant  
Dawn Lovell – Shelter/Mental Health Counselor  
Yanique Duff Ballard – Shelter Resident Assistant  
Jody Schaible – Campus Pastor/Facilities Manager  
Andrea Jordan – Housing Case Manager



**Karen's last day with some of the staff**

Thank you to everyone for embracing the opportunity to serve in an even greater capacity. With that said, I know for certain that all of the Interfaith staff value our volunteers more than gold. Without each and every one of them who give of their time and talents so freely, Interfaith wouldn't be possible. We can't wait to have all of our volunteers back safely. We sure do miss their smiling faces and kind hearts. THEY are truly the heart of Interfaith. My love and prayers go out to each and every one.

*In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35*

## Sharing Your Talents and Time

As our volunteers have been getting their vaccinations they have been reaching back out to us and we are so excited to get back to a new, but more familiar, normal. We still have several needs though, so if you want to join our amazing volunteer team now is a great time. It only takes as little as 3 hours a week! Contact me and I would love to give you a tour of our campus and find the volunteer opportunity that fulfills your purpose.

**Contact:** Tina Reid at (352) 629-8868 x210 or [tina.reid@iesmarion.org](mailto:tina.reid@iesmarion.org)



## Being a Blessing to Others, by Koya Harris-Beard, Manager

Overseeing two departments gives me the opportunity to recognize two lovely ladies that volunteer for us! The first is Leah (pictured right). She has been with Interfaith for about 5 1/2 years and was introduced to us by her friend Pat Ball who was working in the Free Clothing Boutique. Pat's co-volunteer had gone on vacation and she recruited Leah. She was handed a volunteer application and Leah's been with us ever since! She says that she volunteers with Interfaith with the hope that she will bless others, "I so often get blessed in the process. I've volunteered with some really great volunteers and clients." Leah continues to volunteer despite the pandemic, offering her knowledge and support to me to help make our boutique better. I am truly grateful for her. A scripture she quotes from Hebrews 10:24 says, "*Commit to acts of compassion that will alleviate distress and inspire courage, spirit and hope.*"



**Leah Poses in the Free Clothing Boutique**



**Lois in Social Services**

In the Social Services Department is Lois (pictured left). To know her is to love her. She has a constant glow. Thursday is my favorite day because I know she'll be here - energetic, joyful, encouraging me and ready to give everything away to those in need! Lois has been here for almost 3 years. She had just stopped volunteering with meals on wheels and was looking to help elsewhere. Because 1st Presbyterian Church was a supporter of Interfaith, she decided to tour our facilities. If you are on the fence about volunteering, she says, "No matter where you are in life you can give of yourself to others, which in turn blesses you. We all have a different talent and your talent may just be the blessing for our clients. I have never left without taking blessings home with me."

## Many Thanks to...

We are so grateful to the amazing team from The Vines who transformed Charley's Garden in the rain. What a selfless way to spend a Saturday morning - pulling weeds, planting, and more! The memorial garden is now beautiful again!

Thank you to TekMasters Swim Club for their donation of 62 bags of toiletries and makeup donated to Interfaith for homeless women and those in the shelter. Thanks to everyone who donated and helped fill bags!



**Swim Club**

Special thanks for these donations (in pounds): College Park Church of God: 185; First Assembly of God: 186; First Presbyterian Church: 1,245 pounds; St Paul's United Methodist Church: 576; American Panel: 59; Countryside Presbyterian Church: 692; and AT & T call center: 234.

And to Joseph Reynolds: 1,000 pounds of food & hygiene; and First Baptist Church: \$51.00 of bus tokens.

## Getting Fit, by Jody Schaible, Campus Pastor

Back in March of 2018, I was the Pastor for Church in the Garden and I had been notified via a friend that Zone Health and Fitness wanted to get involved in serving our homeless community. They wanted to serve protein shakes and health bars to our friends on the street, and they wanted them to work out and exercise with their staff. My mind was blown at the awesome opportunity! It was great to see the Zone staff come out and get to know our homeless friends and invest their time and talents to improve their health and well-being. At the time, Brett Wood, who worked out at the Zone, spearheaded the program and really got to know our homeless friends and began building relationships with them, along with sharing his love of fitness.

Three years later, Brett has become a fixture around here with his ministry, Get Fit in the Garden, and now pastors every Saturday. He rides his bike to Interfaith with his dog Roxy in tow, and holds church for our friends on the street. It's been an incredible journey to watch how God has worked through Brett to heal many people, both physically and spiritually.



**Brett (on right) poses with some of his new friends on Saturday**

## **Having a Servitude Heart like Christine by Yanique Duff-Ballard, Shelter Case Manager**

Volunteerism is a significant component of our ministries, and without our volunteers, Interfaith could not exist. Through our volunteers, we can accomplish our goals and significantly impact our community and those we serve. There are many reasons why an individual may volunteer - some people volunteer because it is the right thing to do, and others like Christine have a heart of servitude and is led by the holy spirit.

Christine has been volunteering with Interfaith's shelter for a few months now despite her busy schedule. She shows up with an infectious smile on her face and a word in her heart to bless our shelter residents and staff. Christine is always ready and willing to give a helping hand and has never refused to help, no matter what the task may be. She is a team player that is reliable, energetic, trustworthy, and passionate about what she does. As a volunteer for the shelter, Christine wears many hats, and she wears them well for the Lord. In December of last year, Christine bought Christmas gifts for the residents of the shelter. This is a big deal to our residents as they oftentimes feel left out if they don't have family to celebrate with. She also helps to serve dinner to the shelter residents every Saturday. She babysits for parents during their intake into the shelter program. This very helpful as it allows the parent(s) to focus on the process as their full attention is vital to the intake process.



**Volunteer Christine**

Most importantly, Christine is a Praying Princess member - a Bible-based support group for past and present shelter residents and staff. Her love and support for our residents and staff is like no other, and we are immensely blessed to have her on our team. As the bible says in 1 Peter 4:10, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" and Christine is a living example.

Christine is truly a blessing to us and I pray the Lord continues to use her to inspire others.

## **New Advocate Brings Compassion by Diane Coleman, Center for Life Manager**



**Shelah's smile warms clients' hearts**

This summer 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. Our newest advocate, Shelah, came to us from the school education system and we are lucky to have such a compassionate, caring person advocating for our clients. Many of our clients qualify for benefits, however, the process for applying is sometimes frustrating and challenging for them. Having someone to help advocate such as Shelah during times of stress helps them in so many ways. Sometimes our clients need help reading legal mail or just interpreting for them. Shelah never rushes our clients and will spend as long as she can to ease them into the process or just advising them on their next steps. Many times, our clients can be very stressed, but once Shelah starts to work with them and they see her unwavering compassion towards them, it doesn't take long for them to relax.

We have been blessed to served approximately 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 need so desperately. We are blessed to be able to provide the extra help for our people that we serve and love. We are blessed to have such an amazing advocate as Shelah.

*God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. Hebrews 6:10*

## Special Gifts

### In MEMORY of:

Jan Stevens

By: Sandra & Kirby Manning

A Friend

By: Jo Len & Joan Battle

Jim Yancey

By: Michael & Diane Finn

Dick Hancock

Judith Lynn Foster

By: Victor & Barbara Musleh

Lucy

By: Annette Holland

Cindy Morse

By: Nathan & Patricia Gilman

Carole DeLuca

By: Frank DeLuca

Peggy Holden

By: Kevin Hanna

Yama Scott

Cathy Boyce

Jim Peoples

By: Julie Ross

Helen Studenic

By: Jessica & John Usher

Jackie Young

Joe Simmons

Dr Ed Updike

Keith Duncan

By: Deb & Tommy Bond

Chief Greg Graham

By: Christopher & Patricia Bald

### In HONOR of:

Mr & Mrs John Stead's marriage

By: Anita Cohen

### 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.

## Packing a Backpack of Hope

I have been volunteering at Food for Kids for 3 years now. Me and my daughter Emma, volunteer together, packing backpacks (which now due to COVID are plastic grocery bags). I volunteer here because this cause is one that I can relate to. As a child I would have done anything to have the food that is provided for these kids to have over the weekend. I came from a home where money was definitely tight, and sometimes knew my mother struggled to provide us food to eat. This program provides such a service to the community. I also feel that every kid deserves to have the security to know that food will be provided for them when they are not in school. Some children take for granted everything that a school provides for them, but for some kids, it is an escape from a difficult home life, an opportunity to strive, and a place for their basic needs to be met. I am proud to volunteer with Food 4 Kids and am grateful for all of the donors whom make this program such a success. The least I can do is give my time when I know it means so much!

My hobbies include taking care of both my human babies and fur babies, I have 2 girls, 2 cats and 2 dogs. As you can see 2 is my lucky number.

**By Alicia Costa, Food 4 Kids Volunteer**



**Alicia and Emma**



**Delores unpacking food**

## Food 4 Kids New Manager

Interfaith is proud to announce our new Food 4 Kids Manager. Delores Bulgin (pictured left) is perfect for the job. She has been a volunteer at Food 4 Kids for 2 years. She started out picking up backpacks from Sparr Elementary and since Covid she has been delivering for 2 schools with a total of about 34 bags. Delores is always upbeat and has a very positive attitude. Food 4 Kids will be blessed by her service.

We also say farewell to Karen Fant, who's retiring to spend time with her family. She will be missed, but her awesome impact on this program will continue for many years to come!



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



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## 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.*

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### Meet Prayer Warrior Viola, by Steve Clem, Food Distribution Manager

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At the Food Distribution Center, one of our special ministries is the Prayer Room. Although COVID put a crimp in our process, faithful Viola Thomas, has continued to show up and pray for our clients. After sitting down with Viola, I learned that she was raised in a Christian home but as she grew up, she lost her faith. She found that her life felt empty, and nothing went right. She realized that Christ was missing from her life and she rededicated herself to Him.

Today, she's an evangelist, minister and chaplain. Viola says she loves people and enjoys showing Jesus' love to others. She found her way to Interfaith's Prayer Room 4 years ago, and she said she felt led to be here. "I watched how Interfaith treated people with the love of Christ, and what they did for people, and I knew I wanted to be a part of it." She remembers a few years ago, a lady came in pushing a shopping cart with her 2 babies inside. Viola said, "She asked for a stroller. I went to the Manager Steve and learned we didn't have one, but Steve got in his truck and came back with a brand new two-seat stroller for her. What a miracle for her – there were tears for sure!" Viola said, "I have watched blessings pour from this building, and I am so grateful to be a part of it."



**Viola Faithfully Shows up to Help**