

Being the Church, by Wendy Davis, Homeless Prevention Specialists

When I moved from South Carolina to Ocala in 2020, my two top priorities were a new church and a new hair stylist (it's between God and I which was #1 but I am so glad He is a God of forgiveness). The motto of my home church of 15 years was... "Don't just go to church. Be the church." I knew replacing my beloved church was going to be a challenge, but I trusted that God would lead me to the right church home. Fast forward about 8 months, I shared with my pastor at my new church about my new job as a Homeless Prevention Specialist at Interfaith. Pastor Rick's face exploded with excitement. How can Dunnellon Community Church partner with Interfaith, what are your needs, what services do you provide...? Jessica Rodriguez and Tina Reid came from Interfaith to speak to the church about our mission and services. Folks signed up for volunteer opportunities and had many questions. Everyone was excited to get involved!

Fast forward again, as I shared with Pastor Rick that Interfaith needed towels for our Shower Ministry. I had noticed we were completely out, and as much as our homeless friends wanted a shower, it's pretty frustrating to not be able to dry off. It was time to put out the word! The next Sunday, Pastor Rick shared the need with the congregation for clean towels and it became the church goal for December to fill a trailer with towels. The Christmas Eve offering was to be split between Interfaith and tornado victims in Kentucky. Not only did Interfaith receive a very generous donation, but in January, Pastor Rick delivered a trailer packed with over 300 towels! Since then, a group from church has started serving dinner once a month for our shelter residents.

To "be the church" in your community, it doesn't take a lot... a clean bath towel, a meal, a prayer. Interfaith would not exist without those of you already being the church - and we sincerely thank you! If you want to get involved and find a way to support those in need in the community - join us here on the front lines. There's a spot just for you!

Lastly, I know you ladies are wondering if God fulfilled my need for a new hair stylist. Well let me close with Philippians 4:6... "Do not worry about anything but pray and ask God for everything you need, always giving thanks"!

Rain Causes Miserable Days for Those in the Weather, by Koya Harris-Beard

How many of our readers remember the nursery rhyme that goes: "It's raining; it's pouring. The old man is snoring..."? As I pulled into work one morning, I saw several of our friends who are experiencing homelessness sitting up under the tree with their heads



Alan's happy with a poncho

bowed. It wasn't because they were praying or because they were asleep, it was because they needed to keep the rain from getting in their eyes. In that instant I jumped to action to try and get them dry and some kind of covering from the rain. How often do we take that for granted? Having an umbrella? A poncho? Rain jacket? Rain boots? Many of us get up in the morning and check the forecast to see what we should wear for the day, and we dress accordingly. Unfortunately, our homeless friends don't get that luxury. This nursery rhyme popped in my head as the rain was coming down and I thought, "the old man was able to sleep soundly and snore that night during the pouring rain probably because he was snuggled in his warm bed away from the elements."

Our friends need our help. A poncho, umbrella, or rain jacket would be a perfect gift, especially for the upcoming rainy months. Luckily today, I had a few ponchos left in the office and 2 mini umbrellas. The joy they expressed after being able to get dry and stay dry is priceless. Your donations can be dropped off at 435 NW 2nd Street, Ocala FL 34475. Ask for Koya.



Pastor Rick Hooper poses with Wendy and Jody with hundreds of towels

From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley-Greenway



Does it feel like you've been literally launched into 2022? I know that is how we feel here at Interfaith. We have so many wonderful things in progress. We should be closing on the 14th Street Apartments for our Permanent Supportive Housing Program and Low Income Housing mixed-use by the end of the month. We are in the design phase of a 5,000 square foot Engagement and Human Services Center to be built on our campus where services to the homeless can be expanded. Just today Sonya and I sat with an architect and reviewed the first draft of a shelter renovation that will add approximately 25 additional emergency beds for women experiencing homelessness. God is doing such great things here and in our community. I would be remiss if I didn't offer up a special thank you to those churches who have wrapped their arms around our supportive housing project: Meadowbrook Church, Church of Hope, Central Christian Church and Fort King Presbyterian. We are beyond excited to be partnering with you in this endeavor. I also want to thank the Ocala Sunset Rotary club for helping with the interior painting of one of the larger units.

With all of this forward motion, we are jumping back into the fund-raising event business. We are currently setting the date for our next annual Ladies High Tea! If you've never experienced it before, this is your year! We expect this event to be bigger and more spectacular than ever before, so stay tuned and check out our Facebook page and Instagram for more information. Again, we couldn't do all of this incredible work without the support of this local community and of course, God's blessing.

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8

Community Partners Provide Life-Savings Surgery for Cantobie

About a year ago, Cantobie came to me seeking medical attention for a growing hernia. We scheduled him with a local clinic but because their resources are limited, we still could not address the hernia.

Cantobie had been living with the pain of this hernia for over a year. The size and the pain had grown immensely, and he was becoming frustrated dealing with this. He was at the point where he could not work, as employers saw him as a liability with the hernia. Cantobie is a very hard worker and has an amazing reputation in the downtown area for helping business owners. However, dealing with this hernia, and not being able to get help, was wearing him down.

The Center for Life has been working closely with Heart of Florida as we serve the same population and have mutual clients. I discovered one day talking with a Case Manager, that the WeCare program is a free medical insurance program for people like Cantobie. Cindy, from Heart of Florida, laid out the requirements and what he must do to qualify. We started the paperwork immediately. Meanwhile, I met Katrina who works for Dr. Oraedu who performs one 'in kind' surgery each month. This was God moving behind the scenes to connect all the pieces! We completed the paperwork and visited the Primary Care Physician and were scheduled to meet the surgeon. At the appointment, the surgeon informed Cantobie he had 2 hernias! We knew the one had grown in size but he had no clue that another one was forming next to this one. Dr. Oraedu knew this surgery was so important as the hernia would continue to grow. Cantobie's surgery was scheduled, and the plan was that he would be in respite for a few weeks and full recovery in 6 weeks.

The day of surgery, our Outreach team transported him. Our advocate picked him up after surgery and we had special funding to cover a hotel for a few days. We checked on him daily, brought him food and prayed with him. Cantobie was healing just as expected and ready to get his working life back!

Fast forward to one month after his final physician appointment, where he is now able to move around with no restrictions. And once cleared, he was already setting up work with a local business.

This is just one of the opportunities that are presented to us daily. Cantobie is just one of many that needed more than the healthcare system will allow. Thankfully, our partnership with other medical resources allow our clients to receive amazing blessings. The staff at Center for Life continue to look for innovative ways to assist our clients throughout their medical journey. We are blessed to walk with Cantobie and others needing community resources.



Cantobie sits with Diane Coleman

by: Diane Coleman, Center for Life Manager

Special Gifts

In MEMORY of:

Willa French

By: Betty Rodebaugh

Doug Oswald

By: Larry & Rhonda Mack

Carlyle Ausley

By: Timothy Shanahan

Bill Wilson

By: Alpha Delta Kappa

Fidelis Kappa Chapter

Doris Link

By: James & Virginia Gamble

Irene Collins

By: Nancy Fore

Joe Lyons

By: Barbara Schwartz

Jim & Vickie Marr

By: Debby Gibson

Jerry Hill

David Carter, Jr

By: Charlotte & Carswell Ponder

Walter & Etta Markham

By: Myrtice Bennett-Phillips

David Carter, Sr

By: Dayle & Steven Silver

In HONOR of:

Keith & Jan Knorr

Celine Mack

By: Larry & Rhonda Mack

Rose Rozanski

By: Ronald & Charlotte 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 Kayla.Hess@IESmarion.org. Mail donations to PO Box 992, Ocala, FL 34478.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. Ephesians 3:20

Special Thanks to...

What a blessing! Trinity Baptist Church came with over 80 people to help spruce up our ministries. They were cleaning buildings, vehicles, painting, sorting food, and pressure washing! And worship service with breakfast at Agape Park too! Pictured right.

Special thanks for these large donations (in pounds): New Zion Missionary Baptist: 2,578; First Baptist, Ocala: 312 pounds; Ocala West United Methodist: 4844; and Grace Episcopal Church: 124. Also Paradise Ministries: 20 cases of food, 25 pair of socks; Advent Health: 6 boxes of food and Crafty Christians: 10 bed-mats w/fleece blankets, crocheted scarves, hats, blankets and ear warmers! And special thanks to Cornerstone School for their donation of 669 pounds of food!

Thank you to Carolyn and her ladies group at Central Christian for putting together over 70 hygiene bags for our Shower Ministry!

Community Comes to Tomas' Aid, by Michelle Collier

Last year our shelter was blessed with the unusual opportunity to help a gentleman that needed shelter. Normally, we refer men out to other agencies because we help women, single dads with kids, children and families. When we met Tomas, he was living on the street, but he started doing yard work every day with our maintenance crew. He's one of the hardest workers you'll ever meet! As our staff worked alongside him however, learning his story was difficult due to a language barrier - Tomas is originally from Cuba.

There was something special about Tomas, and we felt led to get him off the street and work with him. Shortly after, Tomas had a stroke and we were able to get him immediate medical attention. We believe it was divine intervention that led Tomas to us, as he probably would have died living on the street by himself.

Our team has been working towards getting Tomas' birth certificate, which will lead to receiving an ID card and other benefits. Tomas' journey was also hampered by his health. But he's now getting the care he needs, including community partners that have united to help him.

Chris Hickman with the Ocala Community Paramedic Program started coming and doing physical therapy and blood pressure checks a few times a week. Chris was able to connect us to Dr. Pamela Lewin with the Estella Byrd Whitman Wellness and Medical Center. She was able to get the proper medications prescribed to help Tomas maintain a stable blood pressure and minimize the risk of another stroke. He now sees them monthly.

Today, Rachel Colon (pictured right), who is the Director of Nursing with Team Select comes weekly to visit Tomas, helping him develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

We want to extend our deepest gratitude to all who have come together to help Tomas. We are blessed to partner with each and every one of you.



Trinity Baptist Work Day Blesses Interfaith!



Tomas meets with Rachel weekly



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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.

**Volunteers That Make the Difference,
by Delores Burgin Food 4 Kids Manager**

Have you ever had the pleasure of meeting someone that truly wants to make a difference? For me, that's working with Andy Rose. Always on time and great at keeping up with our program, he's been a volunteer for many years. Even when the school that he volunteered to deliver for was not ready to start the season, he called weekly, excited and ready to help! The Food 4 Kids program is truly saddened to learn of his passing, his eagerness and enthusiasm will be missed. It sure amazes me how the little things we take for granted as having a volunteer deliver backpacks or food bags to our schools, mean so much to the less fortunate people receiving them. It is very rewarding, and Food 4 Kids is blessed to have outstanding volunteers like Andy. There is no way Interfaith could afford to provide this service without the loving support of our community. We thank God for this ministry and all who support us, and pray that God continues to bless everyone that makes our program successful.

**Thrift Store Treasures,
by Shannon Pickering**

Everybody is Irish on St Patrick's Day, but do you own a piece of green clothing to prevent getting pinched? Come visit us at the Interfaith Thrift Store and check out our aisles of gently used clothing. We have a wide assortment of sizes, sure to please everyone!

If you haven't been in lately, be sure to browse through Karla's Closet, our boutique area with name brands such as St Johns, Miss Me, and Lily Pulitzer.

We are waiting to see you at
718 North Pine in Ocala!
Stop and shop soon.

Monday- Saturday
9am-4pm

