

See a Need, Fill a Need, by Wendy Davis, Homeless Prevention Specialist

I am a “yard sale, thrift store, estate sale and free stuff on the side of the road” junkie. When I moved to Marion County about 2 years ago, my sister and I would travel the county in search of treasures to fill my new home and especially unique yard frogs. Okay, actually any kind of frogs. Then I started working at Interfaith and I began to see a need for specific items that our homies could use. Our shower ministry ALWAYS needs *towels*. Always! Estate sales are a great place to find towels. I noticed folks asking for *backpacks* a lot. And *belts*! We can clothe a guy from top to bottom but if his pants are falling down...well, you get the visual. When it rains the homies get wet, so we need *umbrellas*. When it isn't raining, they are baking in the scorching sun. Now when I hit the streets on Saturday, my focus is to find things for our homies (and frogs). I am not too proud to say...I work for Interfaith and these towels are for the homeless... to get a bargain or FREE stuff. Some weekends, the back of my car is full of goodies for the homies and not a single frog.

Another great way to get items that they need is through my Medicare OTC account. I get \$110 of free stuff through my account. My mother of Polish ancestry did not raise me to waste anything, but I can only use so much toothpaste! So I now order *sunscreen*, *ibuprofen*, *antibiotic ointment*, *first aid supplies*, *toothpaste*/*toothbrushes*, *adult diapers*, etc. It is such a blessing to donate all those items to folks who can really use them (see picture above).

See a need, fill a need. Look around you and take inventory of the ordinary items you use daily. We have so many comforts that we take for granted. Then take a moment and thank God for your abundance!

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Hebrews 13:16



Examples from Wendy's weekend adventures and medicare account.

Thanking Donors for their Generosity, by Cherie Galloway

At the Interfaith staff retreat this year one of my colleagues said the words, “just say thanks.” Those words stuck with me and I was inspired to share the word: “thanks.”

Each day before I head to work I give thanks. I'm thankful for Interfaith, for my job here which blesses me with the opportunity to serve so many. I'm grateful for our donors who make so much possible. I'm thankful for God's Grace, for without that, our donors would not be moved to give and to give so generously.

I serve from my desk at the Center for Life as a Health Resource Specialist. I talk to our clients all day. I write the vouchers to pay for their prescriptions and often times I'm able to write a voucher to see a primary care doctor for the first time in years. I talk to clients that have been managing illness for years and those who have just had a serious visit to the hospital and may be at the beginning of a long journey to restored health. Sometimes I just hand out band aids, sunscreen and water. But two things are common to each of our clients, they need help and they are saying thank you.

All day and every day I hear the words “thank you”! That's a lot of thank yous and those don't belong to me. They belong to you, our donors, whether you donate your time, a bag of supplies, items sent to the Thrift Store or our Food Pantry, or whether you send in a check. And those words of gratitude belong to our Heavenly Father too.

This small article carries a big message from our clients, to you - behind the scenes and behind your efforts, so many are grateful and saying “thanks for your generosity” every single day.

From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley-Greenway



As we all tighten our belts in light of the gas prices and all of the inflation costs that come with that, it's truly a blessing to be able to manage it by simply scaling back on how many times you eat out or doing a little less "retail therapy." If that's the case for you, then you should feel extremely fortunate. For about 50% of the population in our county this economic turn is a much bigger crisis. Consider those living paycheck to paycheck that now have to find an additional few hundred dollars in their budget just to have the essentials. Many have been priced out of their rentals and others have had their rental units sold out from under them as Landlords understandably took advantage of the "sellers' market." But the fact remains, that many are now struggling to find housing. These are not our "regular" homeless individuals that struggle with handicaps, addictions and other circumstances that landed them on the streets. These are retired couples,

widows and widowers, people living on a fixed income because of their age or disability or just people who earn a minimum wage. We get calls daily from people desperately seeking help in finding a rental that their budget can afford. But when they tell you that their total monthly income is \$800 and only 4% of all rental units in the county are priced under \$700 (and are already occupied), where can we point them? With the Ocala Housing Authority dealing with a very long waiting list and in desperate need of more housing units, there are no reasonable options. Even if they do find a rental, they will be in competition with several other applicants and only have a chance of being selected. At least we can invite them to come get assistance with food to help manage their budgets. And if you're wondering...we've seen a significant increase in the number of individuals coming to our pantry. The biggest increase is the size of the families. Imagine having 5 or more mouths to feed! So thank you to those of you who have been bringing food donations. While I would much rather greet you all with good news in this newsletter, I feel compelled to make everyone aware of the serious challenges many of our fellow citizens are facing. So the next time you are at the pump and feeling the pain of the cost of a fill-up, pause and be grateful that at least you have a home to drive to. And then say a prayer for those who are wondering if they will have a place to live when their lease ends. Finally, be extra kind to others while we are all going through this season together. Kindness is the one thing that hasn't gone up in price.

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works. Hebrews 10:24

I Love Volunteering! by Thrift Store Volunteer, Diane Yancey

I have volunteered at Interfaith Thrift Store for over 3 years. I enjoy it tremendously. I love the comradery of the other volunteers, the staff, the customers and our Manager, Shannon. I generally tag and hang donated clothes on racks for the sales floor. Sometimes I work alone – so there's always room for more volunteers!

In November 2020, I met a gentleman at church who also had a heart for volunteering. He cooks lunch for about 30 Wear Gloves clients every Thursday (another local non profit that helps our homeless). As we grew in our relationship, we both wanted to help the other one serve. I began sharing his responsibilities of providing and cooking on Wednesday nights so he could transport and serve on Thursdays. And he began volunteering with me on Saturdays at the Thrift Store. It is such a satisfying feeling to help others and give back of our time and blessings to our community. This was a very strong bond as our relationship grew. Today, we are married and still volunteering at both places. I believe being the hands and feet of our Lord is a mighty way to stay humble, love our neighbors and live a happy, thankful life. Being able to do this with my husband is a very big part of our life.



Diane and Bert

Volunteering Options by Tina Reid, Volunteer Coordinator

Our volunteer's schedules are typically once a week for their assigned shift and if it wasn't for their faithfulness, we would not be able to open our doors to help the less fortunate. Since we rely on them week after week, we try to make sure each shift is fully staffed with volunteers. This can make it hard to implement for those that can only volunteer occasionally, or wish for young ones in the family to join in, as our options for those positions are few. For those families looking for how to help, I would like to encourage you today. Even though you may not have the time or opportunity to volunteer, you can very well still help our clients. We are always in need of food. Going shopping as a family and picking items from the list of most needed items, not only gives you time together, but sharing in a special lesson of helping others. My favorite thing to take advantage of is the buy-one-get-one items – you can buy one for yourself, and give the other to our food pantry! It's a win-win! We appreciate all food drives – both small and large – and the thought of helping others, is priceless. Check out our website for the most needed items or Facebook. Donations can be dropped off at 450 NW 2nd Street, Ocala, Monday – Friday 9am – 4pm. Thank you!

Special Gifts

In MEMORY of:

M A Adkison

By: Ann Richardson

Jerry McClarney

By: Dr James & Virginia Gamble

Dr Thomas Fuller

By: Andy & Louann DeSantis

George MacKay Drake

By: Ann Richardson

Dandra & J Burton Gruber

Judy Wallace

By: Ann VanDenburgh

Brooke Koons

By: Ocala Palms Residents Assoc

In HONOR of:

David M DeSantis

By: Andy & Louann DeSantis

Margaret Bowman's 90th Birthday

By: Cynthia Andrews

Honor Someone Special

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.

Thank you Colen Foundation!

The Colen Foundation provides a grant to Interfaith to assist Senior Citizens that are homeowners in need of home repairs that they can't afford. The focus for this grant is to ensure that seniors can remain in their home by keeping it in safe and habitable condition. Applicants will need at least 2 quotes for the needed repairs. For more information contact Koya in our main office at 352-629-8868 extension 206. Interfaith is grateful for our partnership with the Colen Foundation in helping our Marion County residents in need.

Special Thanks to...

Special thanks to the Christopher Lamont Cospier Foundation. His family (pictured right) keeps his spirit alive by donating hygiene items for men and women to Interfaith! It's always a pleasure seeing them once a year, to honor her son's death.



Special thanks for these large donations (in pounds): Ocala Elks #286: 146; First Presbyterian: 270; Countryside Presbyterian: 420; First Assembly of God: 330; Cates Hospice House: 210; First United Methodist Youth Group: 422; Trinity Baptist:



113; Brother's Keeper: 4,887; Twilight Cruisers: 338; Marion Landing: 105; First Baptist: 314 and Chewy: 1,912. And thanks to Leslie Weichens for donating 5 bikes for our shelter.

Many thanks to Robert Slack LLC and Slack Serves, Inc, (pictured left) for your incredible donation! Community partners like you make our day!

Seeking Landlords for Residents

By: Michelle & Yanique - Shelter Case Managers

As Case Managers, one of the most difficult aspects of our duties is to help Shelter Residents secure stable housing. With the influx of people moving to Marion County, low wages, the ever-rising cost of living, and the alarming cost to rent a home, we are left with our backs against the wall. At Interfaith, we have a three-month, three-phase shelter program that helps Marion County families get on their feet. The shelter stay is free due to the blessing of our donors, which allows our residents to work and save money for their moving costs. Oftentimes, through grants and private donors, Interfaith is able to help residents with start-up costs. However, there is very limited affordable and/or available housing to move these families and individuals into. Interfaith purchased a 14 unit apartment building several months ago, however this is a drop in a bucket compared to the need. We would like to partner with our local landlords, investors and partners in Christ to help our brothers and sisters to be housed. These are hardworking people who need a leg up and a place to call home. Based on our research on the housing market in Marion County, studios and 1 bedrooms range from \$950 to \$1200, 2 bedrooms are \$1050 to \$1300 and lastly, 3 bedrooms are ranging from \$1550 to \$1800. Many landlords are looking for income three times the amount of the rent. Any income based housing have a 1-2 year waiting list. Currently what we are seeing is that upon lease renewal many landlords are switching to a month to month lease then increasing the rent anywhere from \$200 - \$500 dollars. This paints a very bleak picture for our unhoused clients. Those that are already housed, hold on to their property for dear life. However we believe that God will make a way through our donor community.

We are asking for your help and prayers in this time of need and would appreciate any resource or contacts that can assist us in housing our residents. Thanks to all who already partner with us and have given our Shelter Residents that glimmer of hope and a chance to thrive. Together we can help house needy families in Marion County.



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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.

Ed Saves the Day, by Koya Harris-Beard

About 2 years ago, Ed came to us with the idea of being able to deliver much needed essentials such as food and hygiene, to clients who could not leave their homes. For some reason, the service just didn't take off like I thought it would, so it was put on hold.

One day David, our Engagement Specialist, mentioned many of the clients in our Outreach program needed essentials but did not have a way to come to the office, and

Ed's name resurfaced. Thanks to our new volunteer data program, Ed's contact info was still listed.

I was skeptical at first that Ed would be willing to help, due to our high gas prices, but he didn't hesitate. Ed came in the very next day to meet with the Outreach team and immediately began servicing our clients. When I came back from holiday break I had several voicemails from people who were able to receive help for the first time because of Ed's generosity to deliver to them. We are so grateful to Ed and so many other volunteers that give of their time to help others.



Ed delivering groceries

We Need Food Drives

Our pantry is quickly becoming bare during the summer months when the kids are out of school. Can you help with a food drive? Donate the items below...

- Canned Veggies & Fruit
- Macaroni & Cheese
- Pasta & Rice
- Canned Beans
- Cereal & Oatmeal
- Coffee & Tea
- Canned Soup
- Canned Meats

Plastic containers please for these items:

- Jelly or Jam, Peanut Butter, & Spaghetti Sauce