

We could all use a Little Jesus, by Campus Pastor Jody Schaible

In January of this year I started back to school to work on my master's degree. One of my ministry classes asked us to do an evangelism style project and my evangelism style is a little more unconventional than others. I like a silent, profound, direct approach, so I purchased 50 or so of these "little Jesus" figurines and I went into work on a Sunday night and hid them all over the offices. Now I know we aren't supposed to hide Jesus from anyone and I wasn't. I was just placing him in places where you would least expect him. I placed him on computers, on the thermostat, in the kitchen, on window sills and even in the bathroom. You see, I have been in some very low valleys in my life and most of them, if not all of them have been my own doing. But when I was in the midst of the storm I would always turn around and find Jesus in the most unlikely places.

Little Jesus was well received! I was surprised at the happiness and uplifted spirits from the staff. One staff member had struggled getting her kids ready for school and was struggling to start the day with a positive attitude but she found Little Jesus on her desk when she arrived, and she told me it immediately made her smile and feel better. Another staff member has it on her computer monitor – and she says that she's got Jesus smiling down at her all day. The comments when on and on. All from something so simple – but so powerful.

So next time you're at Interfaith have a good look around, I'm sure you will find a little Jesus somewhere here. And if you'd like to deliver a Little Jesus to your co-workers, you can find them with a google search! Help make someone's day with a Little Jesus.



Food Distribution Manager Steve holds up his Little Jesus

2023 Impact for Life Saving Help, by Cherie Galloway, CFL Manager

During 2023, the Center for Life helped 1,581 clients with prescription medication assistance. This includes 411 brand new clients, many of them from a stay at Advent hospital. We provided assistance with 2,234 emergency medications, 935 psychotropic medications and 1,739 diabetic medications along with supplies such as lancets, glucometers, test strips and needles.

We helped 72 new clients get their medications at no charge to themselves, directly from the manufacturer through our Patient Assistance Program. We made 183 copays for doctor visits at Heart of Florida, so they were able to connect with a primary care doctor. Some of these patients have never had a primary care doctor. Now they are able to establish a pattern of consistent care.

This has all been made possible by the generous support of the Hospital District, the Interfaith Thrift Store and our donors who contribute directly to the Center for Life. If you didn't know, every donation and purchase you make at the Interfaith Thrift Store helps us pay for emergency medications for Marion County residents in need.

As you can see, the Center for Life is a hopping place! Since we are currently housing the 'Engagement Center' ministry in our building, we see lots of clients that come for needs such as food stamp applications, ID documentation, and help with job applications and housing needs. With that being said, WE NEED VOLUNTEERS! Our primary need is someone to assist our receptionist with greeting clients and navigating them to the right area for the assistance they need. So please don't be shy, come be a part in changing someone's life!

From the Chief Executive Officer: Karla Grimsley-Greenway



With Spring comes one of our favorite fundraisers (or as I like to call them, "Friendraisers"). The Annual Ladies' High Tea has been growing every year so we look for ways to increase the amount of money we raise at this event, while making it even more enjoyable for the attendees. This event has a competitive element to it in that the table that raises the most money gets the coveted Golden Teapot. This is a traveling award that adds the winners' name to it each year.

This year, we are changing the event to include gentlemen and are calling it simply the Interfaith High Tea. We are hoping that men will either join their spouses at their tables, and that we might have some men come in and up the stakes by decorating a table.

In addition to the Golden Teapot, there are awards for the most traditional elegant table, the most creative/original table and the guests get to vote on one favorite to win the People's Choice award. Of course, the purpose of all of this is to further the mission of Interfaith to provide safe shelter for women, children and families. If the fellas think they can come in and give the ladies a run for their money....we welcome it! If you're interested in hosting a table, you can still sign up by contacting me at Karla@iesmarion.org.



An Angel on Earth - Gloria Cribben



Gloria receiving farewell flowers and well wishes from the staff

We are so sad to have to say goodbye to a staff member who has inspired all of us. Gloria Cribben came to us as a volunteer and before we knew it she was running our homeless services. This is probably one of the most challenging jobs at Interfaith. She got the clients with the biggest challenges and disadvantages. The ones that hadn't bathed in weeks. The ones that everyone else had given up on. Many of them were handicapped and desperate. One day she would have a blind man, literally homeless, with mental illness and a

hard exterior. Another day she had a young man show up on his 18th birthday with no money, no identification, no phone, and didn't even know his social security number. To top it off he was half-way through his Senior year of high school doing online courses through a different state. Whether it was a person who just needed a place to get mail so they could receive their social security check and find housing, or if it was someone who needed every service we offered, she would rise to the task and wouldn't give up until she removed barriers for them. In case you're wondering, the young man is now housed, enrolled in one of our local highschools, and is thriving! Gloria was truly a miracle worker. But if you asked her, she would tell you she worked for the miracle worker, Jesus. We wish her well as she moves north to be closer to her grandchildren. We are all blessed to have worked with her.

Certified Parenting Teacher Needed, by Michelle Collier

Raising a child or children can be very difficult, even more so when you are experiencing homelessness. The thought of not having a stable, or possible safe space for you and your family is frightening. Here at our shelter, we strive to provide as close to a normal lifestyle as possible, while we help our families at the shelter to put their pieces back together.

One way of helping these families is by offering resources such as parenting classes. This was always a huge part of our program, but since Covid, we have not been able to offer this specific resource to our shelter families.

If you, or anyone you may know, is able to volunteer once a week or even every other week and are a certified parenting teacher we would love to welcome you to come share your knowledge with our special families who need this so much.

Please contact Michelle 352-629-8868 x205 if you are able to help. Thank you and God Bless.

Baptism Day with Pastor Jody

What a beautiful day to celebrate salvation in Jesus Christ! Welcome Evelyn, our new sister in Christ, who wanted to get baptized after accepting Jesus! Pastor Jody baptized her today at Interfaith.



Special Gifts

In MEMORY of:

Bud Gossett

By: Anita Gossett

Gail Cross

By: Robert Cross

Mary Kerr

Larry Kerr

"Stan" Stanaland

By: Janice Owen

Elma Brownell

By: Janice Frisbie

Greg McNeal

By: Kathy McCormick

Joe Bradshaw

Perry Lovell

Gus Galloway

Clarence Wiglesworth

Carolyn Smith

Ed Lewis

By: Walter & Mara Elliott

Russell Mantel

By: Sandra Mantel

Helen Stutz

By: Linda Robinson

Vera Agosta

By: Gus Agosta

A T Thomas

By: Mike & Diane Finn

Tim O'Connell

By: Martin Schwartz

In HONOR of:

Richard & Susan Copeland

By: Shelley Copeland

Shirley Ausley

Stan Bourgeois

By: Ann VanDenburgh

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.

Special Thanks to...

Special thanks for these large donations (in pounds): Countryside Presbyterian: 780; Ocala West United Methodist: 391; Dr Martin L King Commemorative Commission: 1,478; ; The Way: 381; First Assembly of God: 108; College Road Baptist: 484; First Baptist Ocala: 327; Leadership Ocala Marion: 465; Twilight Cruisers: 352; and Silver Springs Shores Moose Lodge: 196. Also donated: Glenda Roberts: 21 toiletry bags; Jodi Geer: 10 boxes food; Wesley & Kara Brown: 200 shower kits.

The awesome kids from Trinity High School helped pack backpacks for our Food 4 Kids program. They also collected 537 lbs of food! What an awesome impact, kids helping kids in our community. We were so blessed to be a part of this - thank you so much Trinity Catholic High School

Thank you so much Fort King Presbyterian Church for donating over 50 cases of pudding to our Food 4 Kids program! We are so grateful and we know the children of Marion County appreciate it!

Making an Impact, by Tina Reid, Volunteer Coordinator

I have been at Interfaith for 7 years now and I am always amazed at the God-mazing stories I get to hear or see play out in our volunteers' lives. I am regularly amazed at seeing, with His help, God's children pick themselves up from trying times and situations and still have the heart to give back. I wanted to highlight a volunteer that God placed on my heart, Linda. I asked Linda if she I could share her story. She has been volunteering for 7 months in our Social Services office. When asked how she came to be a volunteer she said that her husband of 35 years passed away and she had received so much love and support during that time that she was looking for a way to pay that love and support forward. What she enjoys most about volunteering at Interfaith is knowing that she might be making a small, positive impact in the life of someone who's less fortunate than herself or has fallen on hard times. She also enjoys working with her fellow volunteers.

Linda surely does make an impact in the lives of the clients that make their way through our Social Services office. I know that when we are downhearted, sometimes it's hard to hear another's heart breaking story. But how can we be empathetic and compassionate to others that are walking a hard road without having walked a hard road ourselves in some way? God uses our stories to show His strength. It is only through Him that we will find strength when things are hard. As we give of ourselves, He fills our cup in ways we wouldn't imagine. I pray that the person reading this that needs their cup filled will seek, so they can find, what He has for them, because I know as long as they are willing, it is something good.

Thrift Store News, by Shannon Pickering, Thrift Store Manager

March Madness is on the way and what a better place to celebrate spring than your favorite thrift store. Located at 718 North Pine Avenue in Ocala, we have lots of new-to-you patio furniture waiting to enjoy the cool spring breeze! Stop by Monday through Saturday, 9 am to 4 pm and see what we have waiting for you!



Linda helping a client with food assistance in Social Services



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Check out our website at
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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.

Be My Valentine, by Maxi Rodriguez, Food Distribution Assistant Manager



We love our volunteers at the Food Warehouse. They are so giving and work hard to help out, each day they volunteer. Often their work is labor intensive with sorting and lifting food boxes. We look forward to them coming in and sharing laughter together. Our Wednesday crew came in this week, and they are always laughing and cutting up. Fran got down on his knees and presented me with a box of Valentine candy and asked if I'd be his valentine! They are all so sweet!

Food 4 Kids Looking for Events and Food Drives - can your group help?

Food 4 kids has been having the best time with our volunteers, donors, and community. We had the pleasure of attending some parties that would make the younger generations jealous. One such event was hosted by Club 36 in the Del Web Spruce Creek community. Everyone danced the night away while donating food and fundraising for the Food 4 Kids program. It was an absolute blast and the children of Marion County benefit so much from events like this.

This one night of fun helps provide much needed food for about 1,800 Marion County students. If you would like to host an event or have any other fundraising ideas for the Food 4 Kids program, please reach out to Teesha Garcia at (352)620-8239.

