

CS Servant's Heart

The newsletter of the Christian Service Center

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WHERE FAITHFUL HANDS SERVE NEIGHBORS IN NEED, SINCE 1971

Love Pantry:
Feeding families, one
school pantry at a time



School Pantry Project • Christian Service Center

57% of Orange County
Public School students
are on free or reduced
lunch program. For some
children this is their only
meal of the day.

Love Pantry by the numbers:

13 pilot project elementary
schools
20 of the most common
food items
1100 meals in each cabinet
1500 family members
blessed the first 7 weeks
4900 food items distributed
in the first 7 weeks
\$0 cost to the schools or
families

"You hear of the need, but you really don't know of the need until you come to the school week after week to replenish the empty pantry. Walking past the children, you realize the food is going to them and their families", says Trenna Lackey, a Love Pantry Volunteer. The Love Pantry is a new innovative project helping struggling families by putting an emergency food closet directly into Orange County Public Schools. Each of the 13 elementary schools chosen for this pilot project have been provided with a lockable cabinet stocked with food/hygiene items identified as "commonly in demand". When a student/family is in need, the school's staff members can go to the cabinet to provide enough food for one or several family meals, along with valuable community resource information to direct them to a longer-term solution.

"I connect with this project and what it is doing to impact the children's education," says Trenna, retired from Orange County Public Schools where she served in instructional support for teachers of exceptional students, having seen first hand how hunger impacts children's lives. When Trenna and Jim, her husband, first heard at their First Baptist of Orlando Sunday school class that volunteers were needed to deliver food to schools, they immediately said, "Sign us up!"

Dr. Jennifer Porter-Smith, Principal of Nap Ford Community School, says "The Love Pantry has been a wonderful resource for our families. Once a child is fed, they can get out of survival mode and begin to learn. This changes the type of conversation I can have with the family. How can I talk to a parent about helping their child with homework, when the family has no food?"

Community support of the Love Pantry pilot project comes in a variety of ways, including from the faithful volunteers who are delivering the weekly restocking requests. Initial funding for the Love Pantry pilot project came from the Love Orlando Fund established by First Baptist Church of Orlando. Big Eye Creative, a local public relations firm, donated graphic services to design the Love Pantry logo. Full Sail University students donated their time to produce a video introducing the Love Pantry project. The project has been so successful funding is currently being sought to expand the project for next semester.



Trenna and Jim Lackey are shown here restocking the Love Pantry at Nap Ford Community School.



The Center's Executive Director, Robert Stuart, was recently awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by the Orange County Public Schools in recognition of the Love Pantry project. Robert is shown here with Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Barbara Jenkins and School Board Representative, Nancy Robbinson.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

Innovation and Response

This year, the Christian Service Center celebrates our 40th year of service to Central Florida. And, as we take the year to commemorate and recognize what you have accomplished in our work together, we also pause to reflect on our mission and our motives for the past 40 years.

Two words come to mind...innovation and response. In this edition of Servant's Heart, you will see just two examples of how the Center has responded to the needs of our community 25 years ago and just this past summer.

In 1986, there was a growing need for sheltering those who had no place to go. What started out as "Operation Cold Night", in cooperation with our downtown churches, grew into a movement that spawned the Center's Fresh Start program designed to restore men to their faith, their families and to society. The creation of Fresh Start was responding to a need and innovatively involving our community to satisfy it. Today, Fresh Start stands as a model for other programs that help restore lives.

Just last summer, when the national media highlighted the pressing needs of homeless families and children in Central Florida, a new awareness was created. Growing out of this awareness, the Center responded by creating a pilot program to put emergency food items in local elementary schools: The Love Pantry. Initially funded by First Baptist Church of Orlando's Love Orlando Fund, we have had nothing short of miraculous response from our first 13 schools. We've provided more than 1,500 meals, thousands of pantry items, hundreds of hygiene items right at the school! Once again, innovation and response were the key.

For more than 40 years, the Christian Service Center has responded. We have accomplished this because of our joint mission to serve those in need and the outpouring of our community. Thank you!

As we looking toward the end of 2011, we ask you to help us continue to serve. These economic times have been a struggle, not only for our neighbors, but for those who stand in the trenches. Help us with a generous gift of your time and your resources as we serve Central Florida together.

Serving together,



Robert F. Stuart
Executive Director



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SERVICE CENTER**
40 years of faithful hands

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808 W. Central Blvd.
Orlando, FL 32805

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(407) 656-6678
300 W. Franklin St.
Ocoee, FL 34761

Winter Park

At Redeemer Lutheran Church
(407) 628-1692
3377 Aloma Ave.
Winter Park, FL 32792



Looking for a great service project for the holiday season?

The Christian Service Center has blue reusable canvas bags ready for distribution as part of our holiday season ministry! Our food pantries are always in need of non-perishable food items for distribution to the needy, but especially during the holiday season. Fill up these bags with holiday food items, and return them to the Center for distribution to neighbors in need. Suggested holiday food items:

Canned sweet potatoes	Mac & cheese	Mashed potatoes
Canned fruit	Stuffing mix	Canned vegetables
Rice	Cake or brownie mix	Canned hams
Cranberry sauce	Powdered milk	Gift cards for perishables

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A Fresh Start: A new beginning

Tommy D.'s story:

"This program is just what I needed. I once had a wife and a home. I lost everything when I got convicted on DUI charges. When I first got out of prison, I floundered about. I was overwhelmed. I knew that I was at risk to going back to abusing alcohol again. Then



Tommy D., shown here in the Chatlos Resource Library at Fresh Start

I heard about this place called Fresh Start. This program gave me structure and support. I'm sober. I now have a job with a welding company and am saving money for an apartment."

What is Fresh Start?

Fresh Start is a short-term residential program designed for rebuilding and restoring the lives of men who are seeking a new beginning. Group therapy sessions help educate the men on becoming productive citizen in the community. Costs are kept low through the faithful support of volunteers. Every evening a different volunteer group provides dinner for the men along with fellowship. The **Chatlos Foundation** has been a long-term supporter by providing funding for the construction of the Fresh Start building and ongoing program support funding.

Spotlight on Fresh Start Volunteer Dr. Bill Becker

Dr. Bill Becker and his wife, **Madeleine**, were instrumental in beginning the Fresh Start program back in 1986 as part of a movement within the Center's supporting churches to expand the jail ministries to assist men as they left the system. *"These guys walk out of prison with \$50, the clothes that they came in with and no place to go. Too many of them turn right back to the lifestyle that took them to jail in the first place. These men need to be pointed in the direction of a fresh start and then let God take over. We now have a whole bunch of volunteers who come from St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church to serve dinner, because they see the difference made in the lives of these men."*

Bill has donated countless hours ministering to the residents and, as a retired dentist, provided dental services to the program residents. *"I used to do it [dental work] for free, then, I caught*



Dr. Bill Becker was instrumental in starting the Fresh Start program back in 1986

on to these guys taking advantage of me. They'd miss appointments and such. I learned that by charging them a stipend amount, I taught them responsibility and accountability. That too is part of the Fresh Start program."

In 2010, the Fresh Start program served 74 men with an average stay of 121 days.

Massey Services proudly presents the 10th Annual FEED THE NEED

For 10 years, FEED THE NEED has been Orlando's highly anticipated social event. **Steve Gunter**, owner of the **Tap Room at Dubsdread** and whose inspiration made FEED THE NEED event possible, was honored at this year's event with a special presentation. **Scott Maxwell**, **Orlando Sentinel** Columnist, served as the evening's Master of Ceremony. **Barbara** and **Wade West** from **American Fundraising Auctions** rallied bids for the live auction. While guests dined on scrumptious cuisine of the Tap Room, the **Sean Holcomb Band** entertained the crowd with their unique combination of Americana, Blues and Folk Rock in original and mainstream composition.



The FEED THE NEED Committee Shown here (left to right) **Robert Stuart, Wendy Welch, Stuart Morrell, Heather Jones, Michael Cantrell, Steve Gunter, Dan Bergondy, JoEllen Click, Renee Alivento, Greg Morrison, Keith Corino, Mary Lee Walker, Pat Jones-Petrick, Katelyn Searcy, Barbara West and Wade West.** Photo by **Chris Casler.**

Thank you to the sponsors of FEED THE NEED including; Presenting Sponsor: **Massey Services**; Spotlight Sponsors: **CNL Bank, New Traditions Bank, SeaWorld** and **WellCare**; Supporting Sponsors: **American Fundraising Auction, Coca-Cola, Custom Communications, Kuykendall Gardner Insurance, Law Office of Mary Lytle, Lowndes Drosdick Doster Kanter & Reed P.A. Law Firm,** and **Momentum Marketing.**

And the winner is....



Best In Show, Jeane James's "Strength"

To celebrate this year's 40th anniversary, the Christian Service Center held the Faithful Hands Photo Contest. For the past 40 years, the Center has relied on donations of time, talent, and money. This contest was a way to celebrate service to our community for the past 40 years. The focus of the contest was on "faithful hands" and "hands of service" with each photo submitted with a short description. **Jeane James**, won "Best in Show" with her photograph title "Strength".

Two local photographers, **Chris Casler** and **Jason Frazier**, along with **Robert Stuart**, the Center's Executive Director served as the panel of judges for the contest, picking their top photos from the wonderful submissions. Jason also serves on the Center's Board of Directors.

The top contestants were recognized at a reception in the Orlando City Hall Rotunda November 3, 2011. Several of the Photo Contest participants and their families were there to see their photos on display. Refreshments were catered by the **Tap Room at Dubsdread**.

Thank you to all who participated in this contest and special thanks to **Darden Restaurants** for being our contest sponsor!

"These beautiful hands are my fathers. They have seen years of hard work, supporting a family of seven. All of my life these strong hands have comforted me and protected me.

This image represents the strength of his spirit with the strength of the scriptures. Even now, when my hand is in his, the world is a safer place."

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