



Nancy Dennis To Retire After 27 Years

Nancy Dennis, Stewpot's longest serving Stewpot employee will officially retire as Food Services Director at Stewpot on August 24th, 2012. Nancy will be leaving Jackson to return to her home state, Wyoming and will live in Sheridan to help with her ailing son. Nancy is sad about leaving Stewpot and her friends but excited to be moving back to Wyoming after 36 years in Mississippi. She moved here because her husband Pete obtained a job in Jackson. In addition to her 2 sons in Sheridan, she has a sister, a brother and several grandchildren who live 150 miles away in Casper. (That's "nearby" in Wyoming according to Nancy.) Unfortunately, during her time in Mississippi she lost Pete and 3 daughters.

Nancy was jointly paid by both Central Presbyterian Church and Stewpot when she started in 1985; just 4 years after Stewpot was first organized and started serving. She began as the assistant cook but became the full-time cook 1 year later. Cooks for Stewpot at that time prepared the meals in the Central Presbyterian Church kitchen and carried it in grocery carts across Capitol Street to serve in the old service station that was Stewpot's first home. The number of people who were served in those years averaged around 40 people a day.

Nancy progressed from her first job to become the Director of Food Services for Stewpot. In that capacity, she has supervised all food donations to Stewpot, all food purchases and the Community Kitchen which now serves an average of 135 people a day as well as 50 meals-on-wheels clients. Additionally, she handles the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday food baskets, Christmas in July and for 10 years she was the weekend supervisor at Sims Shelter for Women and children. She has worked for all 11 Stewpot Executive Directors that Stewpot has employed. In addition to her "official duties" Nancy has acquired many client friends that she helps to cope with the life they have been given. Many volunteers know Stewpot ministries best through their association with Nancy.

Nancy has seen a lot of changes during her 27 years of employment at Stewpot. In the beginning, Stewpot was housed in the small service station building across Capitol Street. Stewpot has now grown into 4 shelter locations, a warehouse and the building complex that formerly housed the Central Presbyterian Church. Fourteen of Stewpot's 16 ministries started after Nancy began her Stewpot employment. One of her most vivid memories is when Stewpot lost its Director Matt Devenny who was shot and killed by a client who was off of his medication. Nancy remembers that these days were a very dark time but she also remembers that the whole community rallied to help Stewpot by volunteering and cooking food.

Stewpot's current and former employees will miss Nancy terribly but we are also extremely happy for her as she moves back to her childhood home to live near most of her family members. If you know Nancy, please take the time to call or come by to visit her to reminisce and to wish her God's speed in this new part of her life.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

In August, Nancy Dennis will retire. Nancy has been with Stewpot for 28 years of its 31 year's existence. She was among the first employees that Stewpot hired and started as a part time cook. The other part of her job was as a janitress for Central Presbyterian Church. For me, Nancy has always represented the solid ministry spirit of the Stewpot staff. She was always at work looking to assist people as they came to Stewpot whether in her particular ministry with

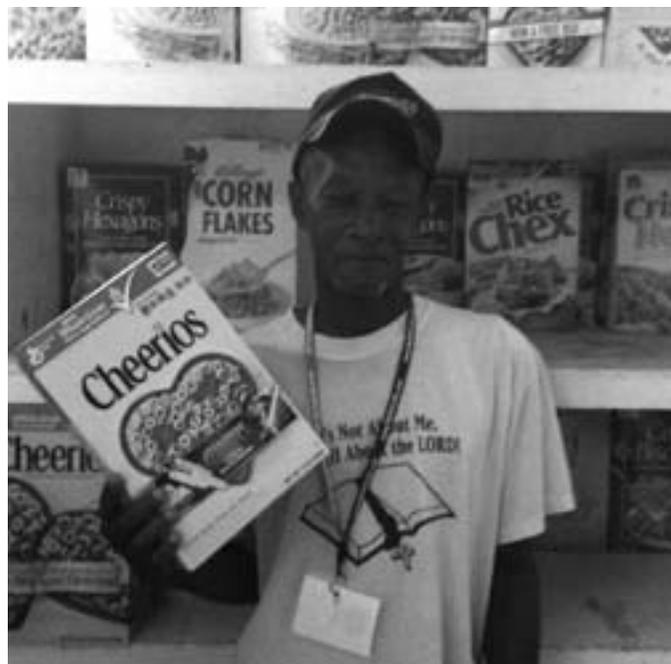
John Burley in the Pantry

John Burley is Stewpot's newest helper in the Food Pantry. John is 58 and is from Learned Mississippi. John graduated from Provine High School and attended Utica Jr College where he studied auto bodywork. In the meantime he has held a number of jobs in the auto business and has worked also as a kitchen assistant.

John is the perfect helper for the food pantry. He is quiet and goes about his business without causing any disruptions around him. John helps the volunteers in whatever they need him to do. He understands completely the ministry he is helping run. He stocks food pantry items and when the volunteers come he asks them if he can do anything to help them; if not, he goes out to arrange food donations in the storage area.

Unfortunately, previous Stewpot assistants and even volunteers have gotten so possessive with the work in the food pantry that they spoil the ministry experience for others who come to help. In truth, there is no one way to

help those who come except to give them plenty of food and be nice to them. That is the ministry of the food pantry and we are fortunate indeed to have John who understands it so well.

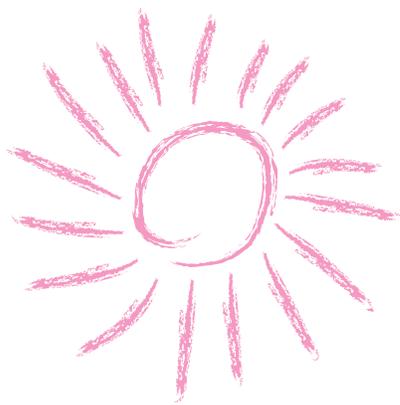


DIRECTOR'S CORNER (CONTINUED)

food or with advice as to how to get help elsewhere. During these 28 years at Stewpot, Nancy and the Stewpot staff have shared many of life's up and downs and thus grown closer and closer until she has become part of the backbone that holds Stewpot together. Stewpot will continue to do its ministries and will continue to do them well, but Nancy's retirement will leave a hole that will be impossible for us to fill, Stewpot will sorely miss Nancy. (see Story on Page)

The other person I must recognize is Former Sheriff, Malcolm McMillin. Even before I came to Stewpot 13 years ago as a volunteer, "Sheriff" or "Mac" had been busy helping Stewpot for years. If he had a skilled laborer in his jail or someone with secretarial talent and he knew they would not "mess up", he would send them to assist at Stewpot. In those years, he has supplied, carpenters, electricians, clerks, receptionists, painters and others to help Stewpot and thus relieve our budget. In the last few years, he has run our Capital Campaign. He was presented the Matt Devenney Lifetime Achievement award which is Stewpot's highest honor by Stewpot staff 6 years ago. In his new job as Chairman of the Probation and Parol Board, Mac no longer has the time to schedule and attend many meetings and thus has had to give up these Stewpot duties. Fortunately, he is still on Stewpot's Board and will continue to assist Stewpot in that way. Thanks Mac for your help on so much of what Stewpot does.

Please remember these two in Thanksgiving as they move to new places in their lives.



Stewpot Summer Camp



As I sit to write this article I am smiling because SO many good things keep popping into my mind. All the faces of the kids that are in our Summer Program- all the places we have gone, and the things we have been able to do. It has been a VERY FULL Summer.

There are many things that Stewpot does. Most people think of our daily lunch and for some; that's where it stops. There are those who have no idea that we have both an Afterschool and a Summer Camp Program for the kids in our Metro-Jackson neighborhood. And this summer, we have had over 150 ages Pre-K to the 12th grade enrolled in our Summer Camp! That's A LOT of kids! If you were ever on campus and saw people running around in tie-dye t-shirts- that was our Summer Camp staff (over the course of the summer we have tie dyed over 150 shirts!) The Children's Dept. Directors- Monique Ealey and Yolanda Kirkland as well as their support staff (Pam Lampkin and Tracy Haynes and others) have worked hard to have a safe, fun environment for our kids to come and learn, play and grow! They have read books from their summer reading program for school, played basketball with the big boys, gone to Vacation Bible Schools and learned how to Zumba.

In our Arts Dept., besides the everyday painting, and other "artsy stuff" we normally do- we have had so many different opportunities afforded to us! Over 50 girls have gotten to go to Girl Scout Camps on scholarship(some chose day camps, others were gone for a whole week.) We had the Brilla Soccer Team come to us and do a week long soccer camp filled with lots of hard work, sweat and a lot of laughter! Our older boys also attended 2 of their professional soccer games to watch the guys in action! Some of our middle and high school girls got free tickets to attend New Stage's production of "The Little Mermaid" and root on Justin Bell, one of our middle school students. We also got to take ALL 120 elementary age kids to Pine Lake's week long Sports Camp at Traceway Park in Clinton. They got to train for a week in cheerleading, soccer, baseball and softball. It was HOT,HOT, HOT but the kids had so much fun! And just yesterday Bank Plus, a tremendous Summer Camp supporter, came and presented Jaden Knotts with \$100 gift card to Walmart for being selected as the winner of their Thanksgiving Art Project that we take part in every year! Jaden's artwork will be put on Bank Plus' holiday cards that are sent out- so Congratulations Jaden!

I could go on and on; we have done so much.....but thank you to our parents for entrusting us these amazing children we get to love and build into everyday. Thank you to the supporters of our Summer Camp Program- without you NONE of this would be possible! And to the directors and staff- Thank you for giving of yourselves to these children and their families. Yours is not an easy task...But to see the smiles, and get the hugs and love- it's all worth it!

Ps... Special thanks to New Hope MB Church for providing drivers and transportation to and from lunch everyday!!! You guys ROCK....



Jim Coggin to Chair Capital Campaign

Stewpot is fortunate to have retired Jackson business man Jim Coggin to serve as its Capital Campaign Chair. Jim and his wife, Pat and their son, Jim and Jim's family attend Christ United Methodist Church. Jim has answered the call to Chair the latest phase of the Stewpot fundraising effort to make capital improvements to Stewpot.

Jim is a native of Tupelo and obtained his business degree from Mississippi State University. He also received his Masters in Business at the Harvard Business School. After his college years he served in the army in Viet Nam and was decorated for actions in that Theater.

In his last few years in the business arena, Jim has served as the Chief Operating Officer of McRae's Department Stores and then as Chief Administrative Office of Saks Fifth Avenue. He retired in 2007 and was honored for his work by being inducted into the Mississippi Business Hall of Fame in 2009. Needless to say, Stewpot is very fortunate to have someone of Jim's caliber to assist in this important campaign in these challenging economic times.

Thanks for the Bus



Stewpot would like to say a special "Thank You" to HisWay Inc. for helping us to purchase a brand new 30 passenger mini bus. Our Children's Department is now riding safer, cooler, and more dependably. If you would like to find out information on how you or your organization can help us to further add to our Children's Department transportation needs, please contact Rev. Frank Spencer at 601-353-2759 ext. 17.

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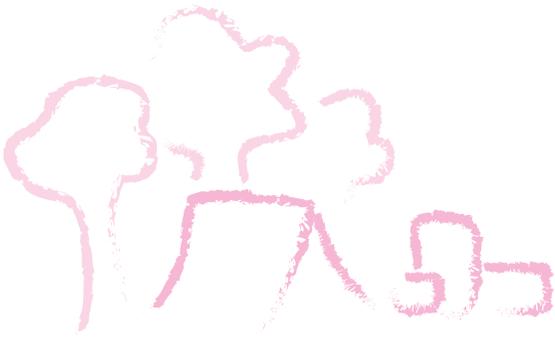
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IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO HELP HIS PEOPLE

BY: HEATHER IVERY DIRECTOR, OPPORTUNITY CENTER

The other day, a man showed up at Opportunity Center somewhat agitated and very hot. This is a pretty normal occurrence around here and not necessarily noteworthy. But as he began telling me his story, I was struck by the realness of it and how truly “normal” it was.

“Carl” is a white man, about 45 years old who obviously has some sort of mental problem. He came to the Center sweating profusely and talking in fast, broken sentences. It was like he couldn’t get the words out fast enough. There was obvious panic in his voice and his gruff demeanor was only intensified as he swung his hands wildly while he told his story. Carl had been living at a family member’s house in Batesville, MS. He told how they had told him he had to leave and had packed all his belongings into the back of a truck and drove him to Jackson. They stopped at Poindexter Park, across the street from the Center and unloaded him and all his things. This was the reason for his behavior. He had a pile of things including a tent, lawn chairs, dishes, clothes, towels, food, even a coffee pot full of coffee. He had things in grocery bags, in boxes, wrapped in towels. It was obvious he had packed in a hurry and whoever helped him move was not careful how they handled it.

I felt truly sorry for Carl. I didn’t know anything about him. I could only assume he had burned quite a lot of bridges in his life. But to have your whole life packed up and dumped in a park in a city that you don’t know and to just be left doesn’t seem like a fate anyone deserves. I have made some choices in my life that have caused my family to disagree with me and even had some family members decide not to associate with me. But, I can’t imagine the pain and hopelessness that Carl must have felt. It is understandable that by the time he made his way to us he was in the state he was.

But, just as I felt sorry for Carl, something else gave me a real sense of pride. You see, the reason Carl had made it to Opportunity Center to ask for help, was that other homeless folks in the park had seen him be dropped off with all his belongings. One man volunteered to show him where the Center was while others stayed in the park to watch his things. Once we were able to figure out the best way to help him, the same men and a few more helped walk loads of his things to the Center in the 100+ degree weather of that week. One guy even took his car over and stuffed as much as he could in the trunk (the rest of his car was filled with his own things since he lives out of it) and drove it over. After several trips around the block, all his things were safely at the Center. No one asked why Carl had wound up in this situation. No one passed judgment or deemed him unworthy of their assistance because of his predicament. They just saw a fellow person in need and helped.

I was reminded that day that no one is so bad or messed up that they don’t deserve my help. I was also reminded of the basic goodness of humanity; that even a person who is poor or homeless can recognize a need and do all in his power to assist his fellow man.



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