



A Newsletter of Stewpot Community Services 2012

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM STEWPOT!

Happy Holidays from a grateful Stewpot. By the time you read this, we will have distributed over 500 turkeys to families below the poverty level to ensure that they have as nice a Thanksgiving as most Stewpot volunteers and donors will have. I am not sure when the Holiday Basket distribution started but the numbers have steadily climbed 300 since I first began working here 9 years ago. When we tell people that we help 650 people a day, this is one of many small ministries that we do not include in that total. Please have a Happy Holiday knowing that you have been a part of helping a family or an elderly person enjoy the holidays also.

We are ending another year of successful partnership providing help to the homeless and those in need. As I said above, we have helped over 650 people a day in the past year with various needs. We fed 350 people a day either in our lunch program, our meals on wheels program or at our shelters. We housed approximately 100 men and women and their children each day at our 4 different shelters, we provided afterschool care to 110 poverty level children, and we provided day shelter to 125 homeless people a day and helped them to look for work or training.

We are very grateful to the City of Jackson, the Edwin E. and Ruby C. Morgan Foundation, and the McRae Family for enabling us to operate the Opportunity Day Shelter. This Shelter helps homeless individuals to take showers and wash and dry their clothes, to make and get phone calls and mail, to get other needed services with the goal of getting meaningful employment. Of course, we are very grateful to the numerous individuals, churches and businesses that support all 5 of our shelters by providing meals, mentoring, or providing inspirational or motivational programs.

We also are grateful for the many volunteers that help Stewpot in other ways such as those who perform electrical work, and those who paint, the hardworking volunteers who run Taste of Mississippi and Trustmark's Red Beans and Rice. Finally we are grateful to those who serve on our Campaign Steering Committee and Building Committee. We are close to finishing the 1st phase of enlarging our cafeteria and kitchen areas as well as making those and other services handicap accessible.

Please keep Stewpot and its ministries in your thoughts and prayers going into the next year. Again we say "Thank you" and Happy Holidays from all of us.

### DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Another years of Trustmark's Red Beans and Rice Festival has passed and the Red Beans Committee has already met to discuss how to make next years event better. This year was the 21st year that the Festival has been held to provide extremely valuable revenues to operate the 17 ministries of Stewpot. I can't thank all those who helped to make the Event possible in this small space so I want to thank the Co-chairs and please know it is intended for all of you. Thank you Teresa Moody and Michelle Bingham for your hard work that made this years event possible. Special thanks to our friends at Trustmark who are so loyal, hardworking and generous to Stewpot. Hope to see everyone at the 22nd Trustmark Red Beans and Rice Festival which has already been set for the first Saturday in November, 2013.



# NETWORK OF PROVIDERS


*By: Heather Ivery*

There are many things about working with the poor and homeless that can break our hearts, but none more than knowing they have a need we cannot meet. This was the case with sweet Ashley. You see, Ashley was one of those people who many looked at as never going to do any better. She had been in and out of shelters for years. None of those stays seem to do much good for very long, maybe because she didn't try or maybe because she wasn't truly able to articulate her needs. Nevertheless, she couldn't follow the rules and didn't seem to want to work. Her longtime "boyfriend" was also her dope supplier. To compound her problems, she also had HIV. When the streets got too rough, she would drag herself back to her mother's home where she was afforded a place to stay but at the expense of being treated with contempt and disrespect. Even this temporary escape was taken from her when she began to get really ill. In all respects, Ashley had been written off by this world. And, to be honest, Ashley had written off the world.

But, the way my God works is miraculous. He didn't want to let Ashley live her last days on the streets and he wasn't going to let the limitations of Stewpot or her family stop her from having a safe, happy, whole life for as long as she could. Yes, Stewpot had cared for Ashley for years. We had provided her food, shelter, clothes, a place to shower and transportation through all our various services, but what Ashley needed now was something we couldn't provide. Thankfully, there is a place called Grace House and a woman named Teresa Viramontez who could.

Teresa and Ashley met by chance a couple months ago at the Project Homeless Connect event downtown. It is designed to connect the homeless with services that they may not know exists or may not know how to access. Grace House, which provides housing and support to homeless people with HIV/AIDS was represented there and somehow, Ashley wound up in the arms of their director, Teresa. She wrapped her arms around Ashley, convinced her to start taking her medications and gave her a loving place to live. She showed Ashley that God had not given up on her and that her worth as a person went far beyond her illness, or how she had lived her life till then.

In the end, Ashley spent her last 2 months at Grace House. Teresa and the staff there loved on her and cared for her till her last breath on Nov. 6. She died with dignity and grace. How thankful I am that Grace House was able to help her. How glad I am that others are able to reach those we cannot. The network of providers across this city dedicated to serving the least of these is nothing short of a miracle itself.



## What we are Thankful for at Stewpot

There are so many things to be Thankful for during this holiday season and we, your friends from Stewpot, wanted to share some of our reasons that we are Thankful.....

- **Frank Spencer** *I am Thankful for all the faithful volunteers who contribute to Stewpot at the 11th hour and make what seems like the impossible; possible.*
- **Martha Moore** *I am Thankful that I have my health and strength and that I am alive to be with my family. I had a stroke 14 years ago and I now look at life through new eyes.*
- **A.C. Smith** *I am Thankful for my family, children, grand-children, and friends even though I haven't always been the best A. C. that I could be; I am glad that I have another chance to get it right.*
- **Rose Pollard** *I am Thankful for my voice to sing, my eyes to hear, my eyes to see, and my family who love me no matter what.*
- **Clyde Fulgham** *I am Thankful and blessed to living to see another year.*
- **LaRonda Davis** *I am Thankful for my family and my health. I am thankful that I have a roof over my head and that I am able to provide food and shelter for my children.*
- **Sandra Robinson** *I am Thankful for His Grace and Mercy that keeps me because without Him nothing is possible.*
- **Stephanie Echols** *I am Thankful to have employment during this weakened economy. I am thankful for my family and my Stewpot family.*
- **Shamberi Horton** *I am Thankful for He who provides all my needs according to His riches and glory. I am very thankful for my daughter Laila and my support system.*
- **Michelle' Bingham** *I am Thankful for the unconditional love of my family and friends. I am thankful that even when I may not act thankful, He loves me inspite of my flaws and see that I have my needs.*

## Opportunity Center Needs:

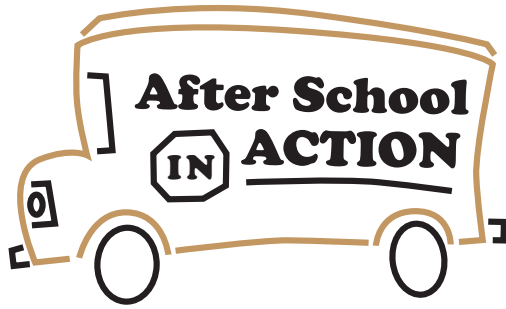
As the winter season approaches, we begin to think of holidays and spending time with family. Stepping out into the crisp air is a welcome feeling after the oppressive heat of our Mississippi summers. Warm sweaters and winter coats are added to our wardrobe. Winter is welcomed!

Unfortunately, for our homeless friends, winter does not hold the excitement that it often does for us. Instead, cold weather brings with it a new set of problems. Staying warm is a constant challenge. With more homeless people than space in shelters, many of them spend the night in abandoned building, parks, woods or on the street. Even when the temperature is not below freezing, a person can get really cold sleeping outside. Add to that the dampness of an abandoned building, or a cold night of rain, and even staying healthy becomes a struggle.

At the Opportunity Center, we provide people with a safe, warm place to be during the day. Even still, every year in the metro Jackson area, people become very ill and sometimes even die because of issues stemming from being unprotected from the cold. But, it doesn't have to happen this year. Providing someone with basic items will help them survive these winter months and let them know someone cares. We are seeking donations of socks, skull caps, gloves, long johns, scarves, and coats for men, women and children. These items can possibly mean life or death for our homeless friends.

Collecting these items can be as easy as designating a Sunday for all your members to bring some of these items to the church, or having different Sunday School classes collect specific items. It's also good to get children and youth involved by creating a contest for the group that collects the most items.

Once you are ready to donate your items, please contact us at 601-949-3540 to arrange for delivery of your donation. We would love to give your group a tour of the Opportunity Center.



As the holidays approach the Children's Program is working hard to ensure that our students have an enjoyable time as well as making sure we help meet many of their needs. We have taken a visit to the Agricultural and Science Museum to tour and pick pumpkins from their pumpkin

patch, the elementary students have visited a local church and sang to their congregation during their Sunday worship service, and we are currently preparing to sing on December 9th at 3pm in Madison for Christmas on Ice. What a busy and exciting time this has been and is going to be for our children!

In addition to all of the wonderful activities we have experienced our students have also been hard at work in school. We are pleased to say that we have about 95% of all of our students passing. We are so proud of our kids and their hard work and determination to continuously strive towards Excellence. We have implemented a reading program that offers various incentives to our top readers, and we now have every child walking around with a book in their hands! With the help of some of our AmeriCorps members our kids have also started a small vegetable garden in front of the hut.



By reading this article we hope that you can see we are truly in Action this school year and we love it! Our kids are being afforded some very great opportunities and are learning many new things. As we near Christmas many of you may want to be apart of the great work we are doing, we welcome anyone that may want to share your special gifts and talents such as, sewing, quilting, painting, you may want to contribute outer wear such as hats, gloves, and scarves or underwear for children of all ages and sizes, or you may want to donate snacks and prizes for our reading program. What ever it is you desire to do we welcome you to come be a part of our "Big picture!" Please contact me, Monique Ealey at 601-260-9277 or by email at [mealey@stewpot.org](mailto:mealey@stewpot.org) for more information.

## Thank You!

We would like to send a heart felt thank you to His Way for our wonderful new bus. We were given the bus this summer and it has made things so much easier for our program, not to mention it feels great to have a new vehicle with working air and heat! The children love riding it and I know our drivers love to drive it. We are so appreciative for our beautiful new bus.

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## Stewpot's Spirit of Giving

If you have a client, a friend, or a relative (or numerous clients, friends, and relatives) that you wish to remember for the Holidays but have difficulty with the right gift; please consider giving a gift to Stewpot in their name. To accomplish this, please send an appropriate contribution to the below address and give Stewpot their name and address. Your donation will be tax deductible and they will receive a card from Stewpot that a donation was made in their name. You also will receive a card from Stewpot thanking you for your donation for income tax purposes. Please send to:

Stewpot Spirit of Giving  
Attn: Michelle' Bingham  
1100 West Capital Street  
Jackson MS 39203

Yes, I would like to honor the following individuals with a special holiday contribution to Stewpot. I understand that you will send each person a 2012 Holiday Greeting Card that will acknowledge each gift.

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to cover these gifts.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Recipient's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Recipient's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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(use back if necessary)

Yes, I would like to make a special contribution to Stewpot Community Services to support your work during the holiday season.

Enclosed is my check in the amount of  \$25  \$50  \$100  \$250  \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Make checks payable to STEWPOT COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.  
Contributions to Stewpot are tax deductible. A receipt will be sent to you.



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*Faith meeting needs in our community*

**Your Stewpot family  
now has a  
Facebook page!!**

When you are browsing the social network scene look up the Stewpot facebook page and become a fan!



**MEMORIALS**

Ruth Hise Oney  
Edna Ozborn Moore  
Bill Eubank  
From: Dick & Patsy Turner

Ruth Hise Oney  
From: Lee Ann Mayo

**HONORARIUMS**

Dr. Harrylyn Sallis  
From: Charles Sallis

Mary Wiggs  
Andy & Karen Taggart  
From Lee Ann Mayo

Christie Burnett  
From : Lucy Mazzaferro

Stewpot Needs a Good Working Pick-Up Truck. If you are interested in donating a Good Working Pick-Up Truck to the Stewpot, please contact Rev. Frank Spencer at 601-942-1355.

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