

## Second Phase Construction Has Begun

By Rev. Frank Spencer

The 2nd phase of the Kitchen/Eating area construction has begun and all of Stewpot is looking forward to completion by Christmas so that we can have a Christmas/opening party in the new space. We have previously shown a number of pictures of the interior and exterior of the building and so I thought I would show you a picture of some of the tough work that goes into completing this project.

One of the pictures shows the drainage going from the new rest rooms and kitchen to the street. In most instances existing concrete and asphalt had to be cut through to allow for the correct placement of the drainage. The picture is taken at the location of the new volunteer entrance into the dining area. Consequently, all of this hard work will be covered up and unless there is a problem, will not be seen again for another 30 years.

The second picture is the plumbing coming up from the new floor in the former sanctuary that will provide drainage and water to a new and much larger kitchen. As you can see from the number of drains, it will be a kitchen which will have access to plenty of water and plenty of drainage enabling Stewpot to keep the Kitchen clean and sanitary for its cooking duties. The kitchen is designed to be accommodating to cooking duties for both staff and the large numbers of volunteers stewpot that serve at Stewpot on the weekends and on holidays.

The next phase of the project is being paid for from donations already in hand and also financial pledges; however a \$635, 000 loan is necessary to bridge the gap between pledges and their final payment. We are grateful to our friends at Trustmark for helping us finance the project. To accomplish the complete build-out of this facility, Stewpot is still looking for donors who may wish to take advantage of the opportunity to sponsor portions of the construction. We are still seeking a sponsor for the kitchen. If you wish to memorialize a relative or a family name, the Stewpot kitchen would be a magnificent memorial to them. We have attached a pledge amount of \$125,000 for the naming rights to the kitchen. If you are interested please contact me, Rev. Frank Spencer at 601-353-2759 or writing to Stewpot, 1100 West Capitol Street, Jackson, MS 39203.



# "It's in the Bag!"

By: Michelle Bingham

It's that time of year again for school to begin. All three doors of the shelters are open, thanks to gracious donor like you, to receive many anxious school kids. As school begins each child should start their day, with a good night's sleep before, and a nutritional breakfast that morning. After all, rest and a good meal does a body good for learning! A child should also start the school year with every tool necessary to perform his or her tasks in their classes. When a child has their materials, it helps to promote a positive attitude and healthy esteem. All of which contributes to a happy learning environment.

Our children should not have to be saddled with the responsibilities of adult worries. Their main concern should be concentrating on their studies and being a child. Unfortunately, a lot of our children are wondering where will they get their school supplies, what they will eat, and what will they wear? It take more than a thought to make these dreams for our children a reality, it takes action!

I believe that if our children have the desire and the passion to be educated in the classrooms, then it is our responsibility to arm them with the tools they need.

If our children need a pack of paper, we should all be able to say- "it's in the bag", if a child needs pencils, pens, erasers- "it's in the bag", if a child or student needs folders, spiral notebooks, three-ring binders, markers, rulers, etc.- "it's in the bag." How many children or students around you do not have their needs for school? Shouldn't we be saying to them "It's in the Bag?"

To donate school supplies or uniforms to the children in our shelters and after-school program please contact Mary Thompson, 601-353-2759 or Shamberi Horton, 769-233-6888.



## DIRECTOR'S CORNER By: Rev. Frank Spencer

### REDEMPTION OF AN EVIL

Since you received the last newsletter, several things have happened at Stewpot. One is the start of the second phase of the Capital Campaign construction. You can read about that in our lead article.

The second major event is that Stewpot had to furlough employees and temporarily close 2 of our ministries because of the cash crunch caused by the diverted delivery of our mail in the first week of December last year. Usually, we start off January of the New Year with a comfortable cushion of funds made up of donations received in December. In 2013, we did not have that cushion. It is amazing to me we made it all the way to August before we had no cash left to pay bills or the full salaries of Stewpot employees. Therefore, I had to make the unfortunate decision to temporarily close Opportunity Center and the Sims Shelter for Women and Children and announced furloughs to the staff.

The closings made for considerable media attention, but as I told Marsha Thompson, a newscaster for Channel 3, the people of the Metro Jackson always respond to news of Stewpot's needs and, of course, they did. This time it was even quicker than I expected. Within 3 days after the announcement closing, Stewpot received \$40,000 from the City of Jackson, grants from 3 foundations who wish to remain anonymous which totaled \$105,000, a \$12,000 check from Word of Life Church to reopen Sims Shelter, a \$37,000 check from an anonymous individual, a \$37,500 matching grant from Community Bank and numerous other checks from individuals wanting to help which totaled over \$50,000. Except for the city of Jackson Grant, all of these donations were above normal August contributions.

What a miracle! God working through the people that support Stewpot's ministry to feed, clothe, educate and shelter over 650 people in need, has now completely redeemed the evil which struck Stewpot last year.

# What's Happening at the OC???

By: Christie Burnett

The Opportunity Center or OC as we like to call it is a happening place with many things going on. We are the only day shelter in the city of Jackson where our homeless men and women can come and do their laundry, take a shower, search for a job in our computer lab, or just come in for a friendly (albeit sometimes lively) game of dominoes in the air conditioning.

When I was asked to write this article there were a couple things that I was going to write about that have been going on here. One is the story of our brand new community garden that is growing eggplants, any kind of tomato or pepper you can think of, watermelons. (And that's just right now). Did you know that you can grow a garden on concrete? We didn't; but it is growing and thriving and being watered daily by our guys who will get to enjoy the fruits of our labors. All of our garden supplies have been lovingly donated by area businesses and such as Callaway's, and Hutto's; and all of the plants have been donated by a group from Galloway and Dr. Shunda Garner and her mother who have been here on a weekly basis to oversee the planting and construction of our concrete block garden. Many thanks!! Or another story that could be told is of Rhonda, our new volunteer in the computer lab. She comes to us from Florida; is staying at Grace House and has COMPLETELY taken the lab by storm! She taught herself everything she knows about computers-she can take them apart and put them back together again; and has fixed almost all of our computers that we thought were broken beyond repair! She helps our clients write spectacular looking resumes and helps them fill out paperwork for disability benefits, food stamps- anything! And she does it with a servant's heart full of love and ready to help anyone who needs her! I could also talk about the booths, chairs & tables donated to us by McDonalds' in Madison or the money received from a family to provide us with an ice machine for our building. There are so many recent developments here that I could spend forever talking about. But perhaps the last major development for us at Opportunity Center is that because of finances we may have to shut our doors for service to our clients. This was a very distressing thing to both me, the staff, and of course to our clients. That would mean no showers, no laundry, and no place for our clients to go to stay out of trouble and off the streets. And since we have had two of our young clients in the past month let their anger and addiction win over their enormous potential and are now in jail (one probably for life); the thought of this place not being available to them was heart wrenching to me. But as usual, servants stepped up to the plate. Servants in the shape of our two paid staff members, Rhonda, and a few volunteers from the community who have stepped up to work FOR FREE for three hours every morning to make sure our clients can at least have the necessities of a shower, clean laundry, and to make whatever phone calls need to be made. So, Thank You for hearing our plea and helping us get the OC back open!

We believe that this place can and will make a difference in the city of Jackson and we are dreaming every day of ways to make that happen!



The time has come for us to say "good-bye" to summer camp and "hello" to the start of another promising school year! We truly enjoyed our summer and had a great time with the kids. We would like to thank all those that volunteered, made donations, and those that opened up their churches and facilities for our children to play and learn exciting new things!

As we begin preparing the building and our schedules for the start of our after school program we would like to share with you the ways in which you can still be a part of the big picture. We anticipate having 50-60 students in our after school program this year, many of the parents of these children have a difficult time with the purchasing of school supplies, uniforms, etc. We are currently asking for donations of school uniforms in various sizes. Our students that wear uniforms range in age from 4-12 years old. Having shoes and clothes that fit mean the world to our students and it also helps ensure that they are confident and ready to begin the learning process.

In addition to uniforms we would also love for individuals to make a commitment to volunteer to help tutor our students. We can never have too many tutors! Healthy snacks, toys for birthdays and incentive prizes are always welcomed as well.

There is so much work to be done as we continue to help our students on their quest for greatness and academic excellence and this work can not be done without your help. Should you be interested in making a donation or finding out more about how you or your organization can volunteer please contact Shamberi Horton at 769-233-6888 or via email at [shorton@stewpot.org](mailto:shorton@stewpot.org)

## **Stewpot Community Services, Inc.**

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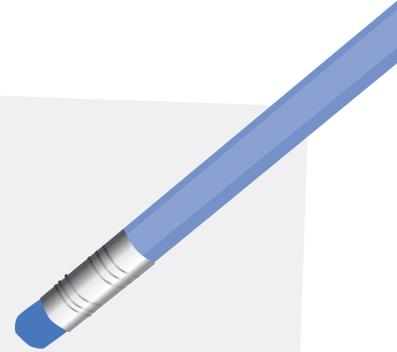
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# Dedication is Immeasurable

## *By: Heather Ivery*



We just wrapped up another great summer camp at Stewpot. With near record numbers of children our amazing staff provided a safe place for play, nutritious meals, and eventful field trips that were not only fun but educational. Even when our seven week program was in danger of having to end a week early because of funding issues, our staff stepped in and volunteered to work the last week for free. Many of them said they did not want to disappoint the children and they were concerned that the children would have to stay at home alone all day if they did not have camp to come to. This type of dedication from the high school and college students that staff our summer camp came as no surprise to the Stewpot family who runs the elementary kids program. The students who work with us have such a love for the children we work with and a strong sense of giving of themselves to better others that we were not surprised, but truly touched by their sacrifice.

Many of our staff comes from our own Junior Counselor program. This program offers students who have come through our afterschool program since the 6th grade the opportunity to become summer camp counselors. These students are offered the opportunity to volunteer as a Junior Counselor during the summer after their 9th grade year if they have met the following requirements: retained a C average or above, remained in school, participated in monthly volunteer activities throughout the year, have a good behavioral report from school. This year, seven of our ninth graders met these requirements and worked this summer with the elementary children's program. These students will be eligible to be paid staff next summer if they keep up the same requirements during their 10th – 12th grade years. Since this will be the first paid job for most of them, they will receive money management assistance. Many will open bank accounts and be able to buy their own school supplies and clothes for the new year for the first time.

The value of this program is truly immeasurable. Not only does it provide us with some much needed extra help for summer camp, but it offers far reaching benefits to the students who take advantage of it. For example, Trey has grown up in Stewpots Children's Program and will graduate college next semester. He is one of fifteen former Junior Counselors who worked with us this summer. He has worked in the summer camp program since 9th grade when he volunteered as a junior counselor. The last few years, while in college full time, he worked during the school year as well. Trey was able to include his time as a Junior Counselor on his college application as well as the monthly volunteer activities he participated in throughout the program. The work skills he gained as a Junior Counselor taught him how to behave in a work environment and instilled a sense of service in him. Trey will graduate JSU with a degree in Mathematics and Education. He intends to pursue a career in teaching and credits his work at Stewpot as helping realize that desire.

Stewpot's Children's Program helps raise intelligent, well rounded, community minded individuals. We are blessed and very proud that so many of them have a desire to give back to us and help raise the next generation.



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### MEMORIALS

Wesley Lutken  
by Jean Brewer

Mary Jane Wilson  
by Mary Taylor

Thank You to everyone who participated in the Christmas in July Food Drive. Because of you we are able to serve those who need it most!

**Raise Money for Stewpot just by shopping at Kroger:** Did you know you can support Stewpot just by shopping at Kroger? It's easy when you enroll in Kroger Community Rewards®! To get started, go to [www.kroger.com](http://www.kroger.com) and click on the Community link. That will bring you to the Kroger Community Rewards page. Sign up with your Plus Card and select a local organization you wish to support (Stewpot). Once you're enrolled, you'll earn rewards for your chosen organization every time you shop and use your Plus Card!

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