New Food Pantry Needs Sponsor

Rev. Frank Spencer, Executive Director

Stewpot is still looking for a faith group or a business or a group of individuals to help us finish out a new Food Pantry and complete its construction. This facility was included in our plans for the renovation of our facilities but sufficient funds were forthcoming to only build out our new kitchen and feeding area and the construction of the Food Pantry had to be delayed. The entire Stewpot family is very hopeful that some altruistic supporters will step forward and finish building out the Food Pantry. Naming rights (as long as the words are appropriate to Stewpot’s mission) for the facility will be given to the one or ones who take on this task.

For those who are not knowledgeable of the Food Pantry ministry, it is one of the earliest ministries started after Stewpot began operating in 1981. Currently, each weekday approximately 20-30 clients will be allowed to go to the Food Pantry in the basement of Stewpot. The clients are screened by Stewpot Staff to assure their eligibility is based on need. The client may be the only individual in their household or they may represent a larger family. Each client must provide the social security number of all members in the household. The actual groceries are distributed by volunteers from churches in the metropolitan area. These volunteers give out food based on a chart that tells the amount of food for each person in the household. Most clients are able to return once each quarter but exceptions are made in dire circumstances for more frequent visits. During Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons, the Food Pantry distributes about 500 baskets each holiday to registered clients.

The Food Pantry uses a lot of volunteers. Not only is the pantry staffed by 2-4 church members each day, but hundreds of students and businesses collect food items for distribution from the pantry. Without their help, staffing and filling the pantry with food would be impossible.

The completion of the Pantry is very important to Stewpot’s mission because of the lack of space in the old pantry. Additionally, because of the cramped space the pantry must be replenished every day wasting staff time. Finally, there is insufficient space to install adequate refrigeration appliances. Perhaps most important is the fact that the space is inaccessible to elderly and physically handicapped clients since it is located down Stewpot steps. The planned new space will be completely handicapped accessible.

Will you help? To hire a construction firm to do the work will cost from $150,000 – $200,000 but I believe volunteers could handle much of the work and reduce the cost of completion. If you have any ideas, please call Frank Spencer, Stewpot’s Executive Director, at 601-353-2759. Please pray that Stewpot can get the Food Pantry in its new home.
There’s something in the air. The clock is ticking as restaurateurs plan their fair for stiff competition. Soon they’ll vying to be the best of the best at Taste of Mississippi 2016 – all in support of Stewpot Community Services. Get your palate ready for culinary creations that will delight your senses. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield 29th annual Taste of Mississippi hits Highland Village Monday, April 4, 7-10 p.m.

Taste of Mississippi, named a top 20 Event by the Southeastern Tourism Society, brings together more than 40 Jackson metro area restaurants, 10 local beverage distributors, live music, a silent auction and a chance to bid on an original painting by New Orleans artist Billy Solitario. The 24”x24” oil on canvas piece called “LA Oysters, Bright Lights,” created in 2015, hails from Solitario’s “From Our Shallow Waters: Still-Lives from the Coast of New Orleans” exhibit at LeMieux Galleries in New Orleans. “LA Oysters, Bright Lights” has been valued in excess of $2000.

Solitario, born in Manhattan Beach, California and raised in Gautier, Mississippi, moved to New Orleans after receiving his B.F.A. in painting from University of South Florida. He attended the New Orleans Academy of Fine Art and then received a M.F.A. in painting from Tulane University. He can be found working on site and at his Magazine Street Studio in New Orleans. He shows primarily in Mississippi, Florida, and Louisiana.

Don’t miss the chance to bid on “LA Oysters, Bright Lights,” taste tempting treats, dance to your heart’s content and enjoy a night of food, fun and friends.

In 2015, Taste of Mississippi raised $130,000 to help keep Stewpot’s 17 ministries up and running. Let’s beat that number this year. We’ll see you there! Get Taste of Mississippi tickets at www.tasteofms.org. Advance tickets are $65 and gate tickets are $80.

JUST A SHOUT OUT OF OUR SINCERE GRATITUDE!

Because of, “YOU”, our friends and faithful supporters, Stewpot Community Services was named Best Non-Profit 2016 by Jackson Free Press. We appreciate each vote and look forward seeing you at Stewpot real soon.
STEWPOT CHILDREN, INVESTING IN THE FUTURE TODAY

By: Heather Ivery

The parents of Stewpot children want the best for them and believe in their potential. So do we. It is our privilege to help provide Stewpot children with new opportunities to help them overcome the challenges that often come with living in poverty. Stewpot’s After-school and Summer Camp programs offer a safe, nurturing environment, at no charge, for children whose parents cannot afford to pay for such programs.

This school year we’re working with 54 elementary students and 41 junior high and high school students.

WE DON’T BABYSIT

Aside from homework help each afternoon, Stewpot kids also receive one-on-one tutoring in subjects in which they are having trouble with and assistance with class projects. But our focus is not solely on improving our student’s educational skills. We also focus on engaging the entire family to combat issues that plague our community and cause many young people to not complete their education.

Communication seminars on preventing teen pregnancy are provided during which a trained counselor guides both male and female students, and their parents, through conversations. Family counseling is offered by a licensed social worker.

Parents are also given help when trying to navigate the school system. Often, the parents of our students do not know the options available to their children in the public school system. Our staff acts as liaison between the schools and parents to empower them to help make sure they’re able to get whatever special help their child may need.

The hours of the day after school and before parents come home can be a lonely and sometimes dangerous time for children. Many studies have shown that latchkey children get into trouble during these hours or suffer emotionally. We combat this by providing a place for our students to thrive socially during these hours.

While there’s certainly plenty of effort put into school work, a large part of the afternoon is spent in play: whether it be on the playground; organized through the Northminster Baptist Church basketball team for our boys; or the NBA “Time to Play” program. Supervised playtime offers students the chance to learn important social skills in a safe, fun environment.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Under the watchful eyes of Stewpot employees, these programs are mostly staffed with high school and college students from local schools. Some have grown up in our After-school Program and view working at Stewpot as a way of giving back to their community. Others just want the chance to help improve the lives of young people.

Interacting daily with people who are on track to graduate high school or are attending college is just one more way we’re instilling in our students that education is important. This is evident in that every senior that has been in our program over the last 5 years has graduated from high school and most have gone on to college or vocational school.

SUMMER CAMP

Summer Camp will be starting in June. This seven-week program provides over 150 students with the same things our After-school Program does – but all-day. In addition to lots of fun, time is spent sharpening reading and math skills, so that they retain as much as they can of what they learned during the school year. Summer also gives us a chance to provide exposure to local museums, vacation Bible schools, sporting events, plays and more. Providing opportunities to young people to see what is available to them outside their struggling community helps shape a more diverse worldview, which will benefit them throughout their lives.

Summer Camp costs $300 per child, and is offered at no charge to the family. It is totally funded through donations.

The parents of our community who entrust their children to us have given us both a blessing and a huge responsibility. We believe, along with these parents, in the potential that these children hold. We are grateful for the chance to help nurture and grow the future.
BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD  
TASTE OF MISSISSIPPI  
ANNUAL FUNDRAISER  
ARE YOU INVOLVED?  
BY: TASTE OF MISSISSIPPI COMMITTEE

INDIVIDUAL & CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE
Is your organization involved? Individual sponsorships (beginning at $300) and Corporate Sponsorships (beginning at $2,500) are a good way to get involved while having a great time. Sponsorships include ticket allocations, allowing you to invite friends and clients along for the fun. Call Michelle' at 601-353-2759 for full details.

GET INVOLVED NOW!
We know you can’t wait for April 4th, but your fun can begin even sooner if you get involved through volunteering.
Opportunities include:
1. Taste of Mississippi April 4th
2. Assistance with Silent Auction Now and the day of
3. Event Set-up the day of
4. Beverage pourers
5. 

Call 601-540-8555 to see how you and your organization can share in the fun while benefiting Stewpot.
One of spring’s most anticipated events in Jackson, Stewpot’s Taste of Mississippi: A benefit for Stewpot offers culinary delights from more than 40 area restaurants, a silent auction, and live music. The event is held annually at Highland Village, a premier outdoor shopping center in Jackson.
All proceeds from Taste of Mississippi will benefit Stewpot Community Services, whose mission is to provide for the needs of the poor, elderly, and disabled in Jackson’s metro area. In 2015, Stewpot assisted 650 clients a day throughout its 17 ministries.

Promote Your Organization
Want a great way to promote your business to 1200+ guests at the 2016 Taste of Mississippi? Donate to the silent auction

Art • Products • Services • Gift Cards
All types of items welcome. To make a donation contact Michelle’ at (601) 540-8555 or mbingham@stewpot.org

29TH ANNUAL TASTE OF MISSISSIPPI: HIGHLAND VILLAGE,  
Monday, April 4th, 7 to 10 pm • $65 in advance ($80 at event)  
Advanced tickets can be purchased by credit or debit card online at www.tasteofms.org.

For more information, visit the Taste of Mississippi website, www.tasteofms.org, or call Stewpot at 601-540-8555.
MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

For the 29th Annual Blue Cross & Blue Shield Taste of Mississippi fundraiser

This event has been a Jackson-area favorite for two decades where dozens of Mississippi chefs and fine restaurateurs come to share their finest culinary delights. There will be a silent auction which will showcase artwork by Jackson-area artists, restaurant gift certificates, and handmade craftworks, etc. All proceeds will benefit Stewpot ministries.

When:
Monday, April 4, 2016

Where:
Highland Village
4500 Interstate 55 Frontage Road
Jackson, MS 39211

Music:
The Pryor Graeber Band
and Hunter & the Gators

Time:
7pm – 10pm

Tickets:
$65 in Advance - $80 at the Door
Tickets are available at:
tasteofms.org, Highland Village Offices, Stewpot Main Office,
McDades Grocery Stores.

2016 Taste of Mississippi
Sponsor Preview Party Host
Anne & Bob Shearer
Mary & Richard Puckett
Nancy & Walter Warren
William F. Blair - Blair & Bondurant
Dr. & Mrs. Daniel Quon
Debbie & Jim Sones, M.D.
E. B. Robinson, Jr.
Beth & Steven Orlansky
Ross & Yerger
Holly & John Lange
William Cook, Jr.
Becky & Don Potts
Carol and Frank Spencer
Mary McWade

2016 Taste of Mississippi
Sponsor Preview Party
Restaurant Host
Crazy Cats Bakery
Iron Horse Grill
Jackson Convention Complex
Taste of the Islands
That Special Touch
The Holy Smokers of Saint Andrews

We would like to “Thank You” for your Support of this year’s Sponsor Preview Party. Know that your Help is helping us to serve 650 clients each and every day.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Mississippi
It’s good to be Blue.
Faith meeting needs in our community

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Your Stewpot family now has a Facebook page and is on Twitter!!
When you are browsing the social network scene look up the Stewpot facebook page and become a fan!

Stewpot Speakers If you need a speaker for your church, civic, or school function, please call Michelle’ Bingham at 601-353-2759 for someone to gladly share information about the ministries of Stewpot.

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 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 Kroger Plus Card!