

Stewpot

Faith meeting needs in our community



A Newsletter of Stewpot Community Services

2014

Be Careful How You Treat People Different From You

By: Ollie Carter, L.M.F.T.

There is great disparity between homeless who are mentally ill and those who have permanent residence and are being treated for their mental illnesses. Many mentally ill who are homeless live horrendous lives and are in need of further help and assistance. Many of the homeless who are mentally ill become victims out on the streets.

Their mental illness leaves them vulnerable to those who want to take advantage of them. Some have dual diagnosis adding alcoholism and drug addictions to their mental illnesses. Often, the homeless will self-medicate attempting to correct bad feelings they experience, but this only leads to further problems.

These vulnerable adults, who receive disability checks, are often taken advantage of and robbed. Women in these situations tend to become rape victims. Their self-esteem continues to drop. It seems to them that nothing is done to help. There is evidence that these homeless individuals who are mentally ill suffer higher death rates than those with permanent residence. Many are incarcerated and sometimes forgotten. Every year, we read of a homeless person becoming a pedestrian fatality or succumbing to exposure to the weather. Many die because of their untreated paranoia and schizophrenia, which causes them to not trust medical clinics and hospitals available for treatment.

We know the stories of the homeless mentally ill, in part, but we do not know their whole story. We don't know of the artist. We don't know the great musician, or the writer, and of all the other God-given gifts to many of the homeless. Neither do we know if they were traumatized as a child or during wartime; if they were abused sexually, physically, emotionally, or just neglected; if they were victims of incest. Maybe there was a combination of abuses? Was mental illness the norm in their family of origin? Did drugs, alcohol affect them while in the womb?

Nonetheless, there is a need to help the homeless mentally ill. Institutions, communities, churches, individuals, interested groups, state and local governments can make a difference in the lives of these homeless individuals. As Christians, we believe we're all created by God. After all, these individuals needing our help are someone's child, sibling, or parent. Matthew 25:40 states it best- "what you do the least of mine, you do for me..."

DIRECTORS CORNER

By: Rev. Frank Spencer

Why Partner with Stewpot with your charitable contributions?

- Stewpot was created by local Faith Institutions 34 years ago.
- All 19 Board members are selected from area Churches and Beth Israel all of which contribute funds and volunteers to Stewpot.
- Stewpot is an Inter-Faith ministry but Clients are never required to get any religious instruction for needed services. All clothing, furniture, and appliances donated to Stewpot are given free of charge to the poor and are never sold.
- The homeless and clients-in-need are never charged for any services or goods provided to them.
- Stewpot has 5 shelters which daily assist 300 men, women and children to obtain shelter, education, food and clothing, wash themselves and their clothes, and find employment. All shelters are placed where the homeless and other people -in-need are located.
- Stewpot is completely transparent and all records such as IRS 501(C) (3) non-profit designation, annual tax return, minutes, annual Report to Secretary of State, and independent annual CPA Audits are available on Stewpot's website, www.stewpot.org. Stewpot is an endorsed charitable entity by the Better Business Bureau.
- Stewpot returns all donated funds, back to the Metro area community in the form of staff salaries and the purchases it makes to support its ministry.
- Stewpot assists more homeless clients than any other non-profit in the metro area and provides services to over 650 disadvantaged clients a day.



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Main campus: 1100 West Capitol St. Jackson, MS 39203



WATCHING FOR THE LIGHT TO TURN AGAIN

By: Heather Ivery

I recently passed a man panhandling. This is not necessarily an everyday thing in our City, but it's not really a rare occurrence, either. The reason this man caught my attention was the location. He was at the intersection of Northside Drive and the South Frontage Road, an extremely busy and rather dangerous intersection for pedestrians. He was not standing calmly beside the road with a sign hoping to receive some generosity from the cars that were unlucky enough to stop close to him. He was, in fact, working the crowd. When the light turned red he was walking up and down the rows of cars trying desperately to catch the eye of someone. His tactic seemed to be to guilt or shame them into giving him some money or hope they would be annoyed enough to give him something to just go away.

I was pretty far back in the line of cars impatiently waiting for the light to turn green. I must have seen the man walk up to 8 cars before the light changed with him in the middle of the road. He seemed oblivious to the light change even as cars began to move until horns started honking. His venture into the dangerous intersection yielded him no gain this time, but as I drove past I saw him take his place next to the road watching for the light to turn again.

What could drive a person to put themselves in harm's way like that on the off chance that someone may give them a few dollars? I've had people tell me that panhandlers are just looking for easy money, or they are just trying to feed an addiction or they are too lazy to work a real job. People say these things from the comfort of their warm cars and comfortable houses, though. I don't see what this man was doing as easy. What could cause a person to give up his dignity to beg at the windows of stranger's cars as they try to avoid eye contact or pretend to be so involved in their music that they don't even see him? What could cause a person to dart between traffic and risk serious injury or even death just for the possibility of help?

I don't know the answer. I can only assume that it is an act of desperation. Maybe there is a family somewhere he is trying to support. Maybe the money he asks for is for food or an electric bill. Maybe he is so terribly addicted to something that he is willing to risk his life. Maybe at the end of a long day of begging he will get in a car parked across the street and drive away to some place that won't run him off when they see him sleeping in his car. What I do know is that this man was not doing something easy. He was standing outside in the cold, dodging cars, enduring rejection after rejection, trying to survive the only way he could, on the kindness of strangers.

Ask and You Will Receive...

By: Christie Burnett

It should come as no surprise to those of us that come from a faith background of some kind, that when we have a need; we simply ask and believe in faith that it will be answered. At the Opportunity Center that faith has never been put into practice more than these past few weeks.

Anytime the weather dips below the 32 degree mark, the Opportunity Center doesn't shut its doors, but instead, opens up as an evening emergency shelter. The unique thing about us is that we don't have kitchen facilities to cook dinners for our clients, so, to ensure our clients that can't get into the other shelters have something to eat; we rely on donations from both Stewpot and kindhearted folks that have come to know and love us. We typically have seen between 30 and 45 per night during these cold nights, which equals out to a lot of food that has been needed and a lot of laundry detergent to wash the shelter blankets after each night.

One week, we were open every night and it got down to 17 degrees (so I knew we would be packed), and I honestly didn't know where the food would come from. I put out a general text to four or five people that have helped us in the past and told them of our need and VOILA!- within 10 minutes I had Roosters Restaurant in Fondren take one night, Beverly and Tim Deer come with Dinner and a movie, We Will Go brought Spaghetti, Northside Baptist Church in Clinton blew us away with sandwiches and one night's dinner and all sorts of other things, and Pastor Tommie Brown from the Word of Life Poindexter came with hot dogs, buns, and juice donated by Cash and Carry! All this, because they knew there was a need! And both our staff & clients were SO thankful! Other weeks have been the same way; people stepping up to give what they have because they heard there was a need.

I said all of that to say this. I walked into the door this morning and was told we had no detergent to wash laundry or blankets. So as usual, I got on my phone, sent a text to some folks and sat down to try to figure out how to rustle up some detergent. And then it hit me. I walked out my door and told the clients that we had a need, and what it was. And within 10 minutes I had 2 bottles of 100 load detergent purchased by 2 different homeless clients that use the Opportunity Center. (and I heard a few on the phone trying to get us some more) Two clients responded because they knew there was a need. These two clients have had their needs met at Opportunity Center and have decided to repay the kindness. That to me, in my line of work, speaks volumes.

I have been blessed to stand back and watch folks step up and help us simply because we asked and because they knew there was a need. So thank you for responding to the needs that we have here at Stewpot and particularly at the OC! Our clients see your kindness and are learning to respond in selfless acts of kindness as well.



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!

Stewpot's Teen in Action

By: Yolanda Kirkland

The hustling and bustling that goes on around Stewpot during the Holidays are super exciting! So much so, we can get lost in the mist of it all. However, in this business I am always reminded of why I love what I do. As this year ends, I have been reflecting on all the achievements the children in our Teen Afterschool program have accomplished. The children we serve come from very poor and sometimes homeless families. They have very little going for them, and to be honest, just finishing school is a great feat. But when I look at the children who have come through our program I can't help but notice that our children are achieving way more than just graduating.

We have children that have been a part of the program since they were three years old and are now preparing to graduate from high-school many with honors. There are also others who are continuing their college courses and others preparing to graduate from college. Two of our young girls, who we have watched grow over the years, are achieving great milestones this year. Miracle Vance is graduating from Provine High School and Ashley Taylor is graduating from Alcorn State University this year. Both are preparing for new challenges in life. We are so excited for them and just as excited to have been along on this journey with them. We are proud to see their great accomplishments.

We also have a young man, Justin Bell, who has been in our program since he was in kindergarten. He has always shown a great interest in acting and this year he was able to take part in the stage play Peter Pan at New Stage Theatre. Justin is in the 9th grade at Murrah High School.

It is exciting to see what children can do when they are shown love and encouraged to do the best they can in every endeavor. And Stewpot's Teen Afterschool program is an example of making a good investment and yielding a GREAT return!

STEW POT NEEDS LIST

HYGIENE

1. Razors & Shaving Cream (Men)
2. Laundry Detergent
3. Bath Soap
4. Lotion
5. Deodorant
6. Shampoo & Conditioner
7. Cleaning Supplies (Bleach, Comet, Pine Sol, Lysol, Etc.)

HOUSEHOLD

1. Bath & Face Towels
2. Comforters or Bedspreads (Twin)
3. Mattress Covers (All Sizes)

FOOD & SNACK

1. Snack Cakes
2. Chips
3. Juice
4. Coffee, Creamer, & Sugar
5. Hot Dogs & Buns (For when Opportunity Center is open overnight)
6. Fresh Fruit & Veggies
7. Weekly & Monthly Dinners (Shelters)

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Daily Bus Passes

Stewpot Community Services, Inc.

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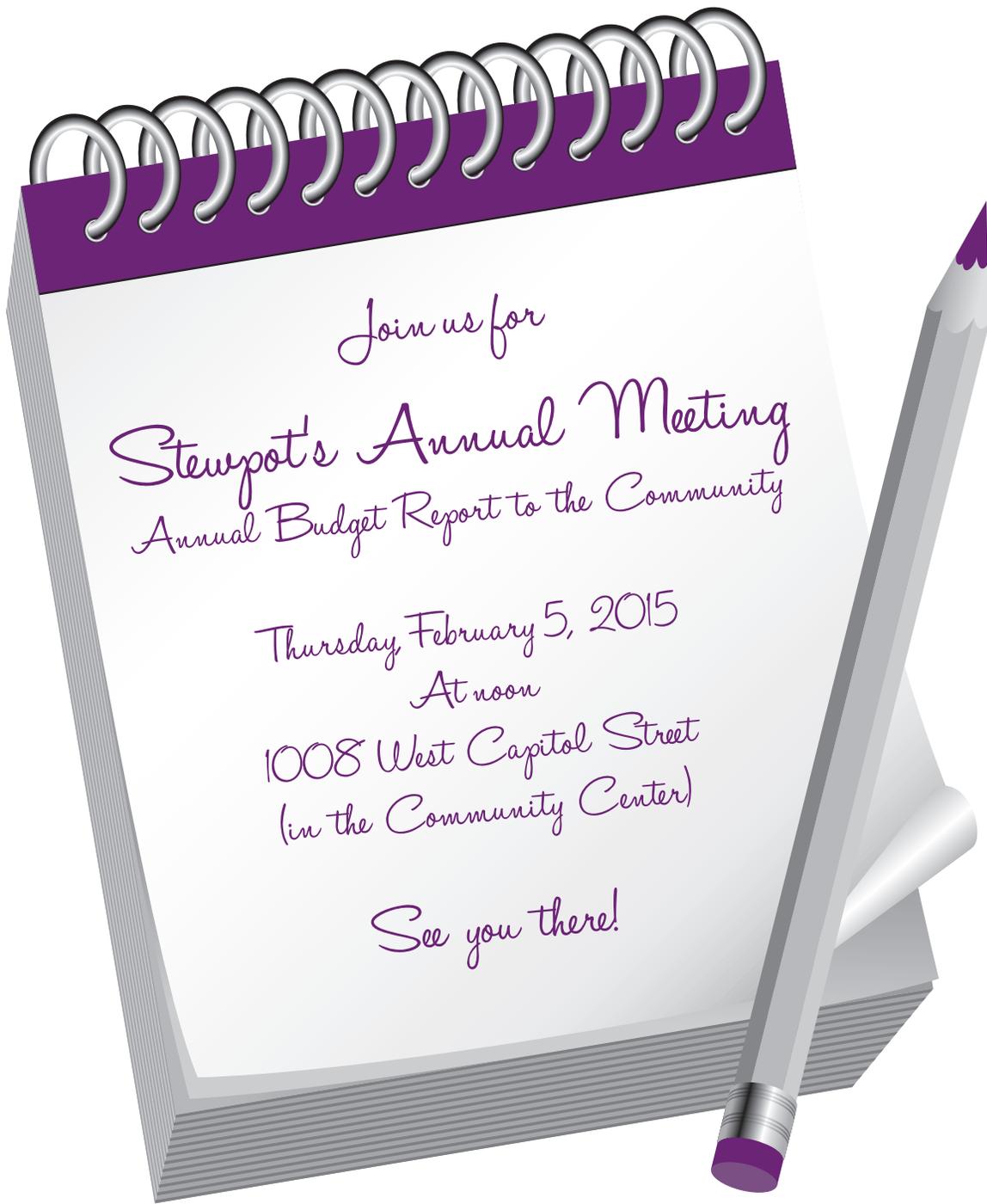
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Got it, Give it, and Get a Receipt for 2014

Do you have any artwork or items you would be interested in donating to Stewpot for Taste of Mississippi? All donations are tax deductible. Please contact Michelle' Bingham with questions you might have at 601-353-2759 or mbingham@stewpot.org. Help us and help yourself!



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Faith meeting needs in our community

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.

JUST A REMINDER:

Your Stewpot family now has a U.S.P.S. Post Office Box!
When sending your contribution you can now mail it to:

Stewpot Community Services
P.O. Box 3610
Jackson, MS 39207



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