WISEHOPE: COORDINATING EFFORTS

By Mary Lee Harms

Often found sitting in the back room with file folders surrounding her, a volunteer is sitting at a computer. She doesn't greet clients, doesn't make decisions about client needs, nor does she hand out food. She inputs information into a computer database on each client the Christian Service Center helps. It's time-consuming, detail oriented, and a valuable asset these volunteers contribute to the Center.

Our computer program is WiseHope, a benevolence software program created for organizations to view needs of agencies charged with helping needy and poor in their community. It was established in June, 2009, as a direct result of speaking with Benevolence Leaders who saw a need for accountability and communication within the community of assistance organizations. WiseHope has over 146,000 names in its database from Kentucky to Texas, covering a large area of the South Baldwin County. WiseHope particularly helps the CSC as a means to share information with other area non-profit help-up organizations in Southern Baldwin County.

Presently, there are eight of us inputting this data. We enter the giving of gifts, services, sharing of resources, alerts, and communication of vital information. This includes how many individuals per family receive food, how much money we give for utilities, rent, and other needs, and the names of all the individuals in the family unit, among other data. And, sadly, this program helps recognize individuals who seek to abuse or undermine our giving.

Basic computer literacy is all that is required. These volunteers don’t get a lot of attention, work on their own, and are invaluable to the CSC.

JUST AROUND THE CORNER

CHRISTMAS CHEER
By Mary Ann Bousquet

In 2012, Children’s Christmas Cheer served 738 children a memorable and toy-filled Christmas. Each year we are asked to serve even more needy children in our area - somehow we do it! We couldn’t without the generosity of both individuals and companies alike. Bless you for your Christmas Cheer support in the past. Hopefully you and your company will consider helping us financially to make these children’s Christmas dreams of 2013 a reality.

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT
By Hope Becklund

Once again, the time has arrived for our area churches to compile their lists of shut-ins to be remembered with some Christmas Spirit. It has been our custom to annually provide each person with a little extra holiday gift during the Christmas season. We have completed our shopping for this season and we are very excited about the gifts that we will be providing.

JUST AROUND THE CORNER

CAMP HAPPY SANDS

Swimming, crafts, games and nature activities made up a week-long adventure for over 30 children at Camp Happy Sands this summer. Identified by Christian Service Center volunteers, the children boarded a bus at the Center each morning for the day camp which has been funded by Holy Spirit Episcopal Church for the past six years.

The Camp’s location is on Johnson’s Beach just across the Florida line and was founded in the early 1960’s by Ida Roose. Along with traditional camp experiences, this camp also included activities which contribute to the development of good character, core values and group dynamics in a faith based environment.
For the past 22 years, the Christian Service Center has been instrumental in meeting the emergency needs of people in Coastal Alabama. Founded in June of 1991 to carry out the message in the parable of the Good Samaritan, CSC has met the emergency needs of over 54,700 people. So far this year, we have helped 2,764 individuals with food, financial assistance and guidance.

Our Food Pantry is the largest on the Alabama Coast and is supported by donations of food and funds from local churches, businesses and individuals in the Gulf Shores-Orange Beach area. This year, we have been able to supply food for a week to 2,234 people. That’s 46,914 meals.

In addition to food, the Center has given over $96,000 to help families with living expenses in emergency situations. And, the beauty of it all is that it’s done totally with volunteers – over 200 of them.

You, too, can be a volunteer through your service or through donations of food or funds to the Christian Service Center where all of your donations get to the cause. Let CSC help you be a Good Samaritan to those in need.

Volunteers

Many will be shocked to find
When the day of judgment nears
That there’s a special place in heaven
Set aside for volunteers.
Furnished with big recliners,
Satin couches and footstools,
When there’s no committee chairman,
No group leaders or car pools.
No eager team that needs a coach,
No bazaar and no bake sale,
There will be nothing to staple,
Not one thing to fold or mail.
Telephone list will be outlawed,
But a finger snap will bring
Cool drinks and gourmet dinners
And treats fit for a king.
You ask, “Who’ll serve these privileged few
And work for all they’re worth?”
Why, all those who reaped the benefits
And not once volunteered on Earth.

-Chopped

Sunny 105

CSC President Linda Chappelle received a generous check from Sunny 105’s owner Lee Hagan and Kevin Keith, Sunny 105 program director. Keith chose the CSC as his charity when he won a recent contest sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and Waterville. He had joined five other local personalities to race to the bottom of the chute in Waterville’s newest attraction, the Dune Racer.
WILDFLOWERS BOUTIQUE
By Janice Moss

Terri Long and daughter, Candice Osborne, owners of Wildflowers Boutique in Orange Beach, have long been strong supporters of the Christian Service Center.

Five years ago they learned of the Center’s Christmas Cheer program for children and joined in with great enthusiasm to gather toys for area children. Wildflowers became the drop-off point for toys and several hundred have been contributed each year.

In addition to their own commitment, they have influenced other businesses and organizations to get involved in the effort including “Locals Night in Orange Beach” and Mirams.

Through Terri and Candice singing the praises of CSC, several individuals have hosted parties to which guests brought toys. Upon learning of the need, another kind person was motivated to pay the power bill of a single parent client.

Full of creative ideas, the mother/daughter team is currently planning a food drive for the Food Pantry as well as a fashion show to benefit Christmas Cheer. They invite you to follow Wildflowers on Facebook for upcoming events involving CSC.

Terri and Candice are true friends and great partners with the Christian Service Center. Thank you, Terri and Candice, for your continued support and commitment to help the Center be a “hand up” for families and individuals in need in our community.

STAN LIESER

While working as a general contractor in Oklahoma, Stan Lieser and wife, Joan, began looking for a place to retire. After visiting in multiple states and cities over a span of five years, they decided to make their home in Foley. Four and a half-years later both Stan and Joan have a busy life volunteering at the Christian Service Center, being active in their church, Peace Lutheran, and their community.

Stan, who obviously enjoys being busy, works four days a week at the CSC. He is the Assistant Food Pantry Chairman, handles the recycling of cans from the First Presbyterian Church, picks up food from Winn-Dixie and Longhorn Steakhouse, and also helps sort food for distribution to the churches. Being a jack-of-all-trades, Stan also helps with the maintenance of the center.

Stan says he and Joan, who is a caseworker at the Center, between them have 9 children living in 8 states. There is always someone to visit when time permits. Even with his busy schedule, Stan enjoys bike riding, reading, working puzzles and church activities.

Having volunteered with many different groups over the years, Stan says the Christian Service Center gets high marks for being a great organization. He says the Center volunteers always go out of their way to help people. He said, “I enjoy doing the Lord’s work by serving people, and that’s what we’re doing at the Christian Service Center.”
CHRISTIAN SERVICE CENTER

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♦ CALENDAR OF EVENTS ♦

OCTOBER
14 - Board Meeting - Noon*
18 - Pizza Hut Fundraiser
30 - Food Drop

NOVEMBER
7 - Wildflowers Fashion Show at Fishers
11 - Board Meeting - Noon*
19 - Mission in Motion 9 - 11:30 am Flu Shots
28-29 - Office Closed - Thanksgiving

DECEMBER
18 - Christmas Cheer Toy Distribution
31 - New Year's Eve Bash with Brent Burns

JANUARY
Office reopens January 2, 2014
13 - Board Meeting - Noon*
20 - Office Closed - In Service

FEBRUARY
10 - Board Meeting - Noon*
22 - Annual Free Pancake Breakfast & Giant Yard Sale - Grace Lutheran Church
491 West 23rd Avenue, Gulf Shores
24 - CSC Spaghetti Dinner - GSUMC

MARCH
4 - Office Closed - Mardi Gras
10 - Board Meeting - Noon

*Board Meetings are held at The First Presbyterian Church of Gulf Shores.

♦ WISH LIST ♦

MEMORIAL GIFTS
RICHARD CROWER
Mildred Crower
Kyle & Betty Gay
Ann Louise Polaron
Jeff & Darcy Rittich
Margaret Walker

HONORARIUMS
DOUG EZELL
William & Beverly Dozier

REV. GEORGE MEYERS
Fred & Pat Faulkenberry

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General Needs
Adult Bicycles
White Copy Paper
HP 56 Black Printing Cartridges
Newsletter Sponsor - Appr. $500 per qtr.

Medical Needs
Wheel Chairs (in good condition)

Food Pantry Needs
Canned meat; i.e. tuna, chicken
Ramen noodles
Saltine crackers
Cereal
Canned soups
Oatmeal (individual packets)
Grits (individual packets)
Hamburger Helper, any variety
Jelly – any flavor
Peanut butter
Mac and cheese
Plastic shopping bags
Bar soap
Toothbrushes/Toothpaste
Feminine hygiene products
Miscellaneous toiletries
Clothes detergent
Dish washing detergent (small package)
Disposable diapers
Baby wipes

Thanks!

“Don't just make copies. We make friends!”

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