

STEWPOINT COMMUNITY SERVICES

FAITH MEETING NEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY

SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER: ISSUE 1

The Work of Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled, When the star in the sky is gone, When the kings and princes are home, When the shepherds are back with their flock, The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman



DIRECTOR'S CORNER



The holidays are full of wonder and joy here at the Stewpot. That's partly because we are surrounded by generosity on every side. During the holidays, our pantry, kitchen, shelters, and clothing closet fill to overflowing with the things we need to help our sisters and brothers who are struggling.

The same has been true this January. Many of you have answered the call for coats, jackets, blankets, gloves, socks, and toiletries for us to have on hand for these frigid days and nights. Which, of course, means that you grasp intuitively what Howard Thurman articulates in the poem above.

After the decorations have been put away, after the kitchen has been cleaned from the last gathering, after the final gift has been exchanged...the work of Christmas begins. The holiday celebrations that lift and fill our hearts also give us the energy, focus, and fortitude to turn toward our neighbors and pursue mercy and justice on their behalf. They signal the beginning of something, not the end, and especially at places like Stewpot.

Thank you for all you do to help make life a little easier for your neighbors in need. Even after all this time, we are still people of faith, meeting needs, in our community.

LONG-AWAITED TEEN CENTER RENOVATION COMPLETED



In June of 2017, hundreds of gallons of water from a torrential rainstorm flooded the roof of the Stewpot Teen Center, causing it to cave in and release a rush of water inside. The building and most of its contents were totally lost. In the months that followed, we made the difficult decision not to rebuild, but to use the insurance proceeds to renovate an existing Stewpot building to become the new Teen Center.

The renovation of the new space moved at a glacial pace until longtime friend of Stewpot, Cory Collins, and his family came to volunteer in 2019. Having worked on the original Teen Center in 1999 with his firm, he was eager to help us create a warm and welcoming space once again for our Stewpot teens.

In 2020, Cory helped to pull together a team of architects, designers, and contractors to bring our vision to life, only to be put on hold due to the pandemic. But over time, Cory and the team he gathered turned the old Sims House women's shelter into a modern, open, accessible, fun gathering place that will become, like the old Teen Center, a second home to Stewpot teens.

Truth be told, I find it remarkable that we were able to complete this renovation in 2021, when contractors and supply chains were so backed up. However, the wisdom-filled Holy Spirit knew that we need the Teen Center now more than ever. We've noticed with all our students some real gaps in social-emotional learning, as well as significant increases in anxiety and depression. Right now, we are actively trying to find ways to support their mental health. Thankfully, this new Center has a dedicated counseling room and some good spaces for group counseling, as we find the resources to help make those things happen.

We are exceedingly grateful for the time, energy, and skill given by Cory Collins; Jeff Barnes and his colleagues at Dale Architects; Clint Sumrall and his team at Lone Oak Construction; His Way, Inc.; Johnny Maloney; Sheldon Alston, Jr., Stewpot's Special Projects Coordinator; and the numerous volunteers who helped bring this project to completion.

You've given us a great gift that will make many a heart glad for years to come.



BANKPLUS RED BEANS AND RICE VIRTUAL COOKING SCHOOL

The BankPlus Red Beans and Rice Festival looked a little different in 2021, but that didn't stop it from being another major success! During the time that Stewpot began planning the event, the Delta variant was surging in the U.S. Stewpot and BankPlus decided it would be in the community's best interest to move the event to a virtual format. These days, most everyone is burned out from virtual events and Zoom meetings. So, we wanted to make the event as interactive as possible. Clint Hickman, Chair of RBR, contacted local chef Derek Emerson (Executive Chef and Owner at Walker's, CAET, and Local 463) to see if he would be interested in helping Stewpot raise money for the event by doing a virtual cooking class. Chef Emerson graciously agreed, and brought on Connor Wolf, Chef at The Farmer's Table Cooking School in Livingston, to lead the class with him.

The Farmer's Table at Livingston provided the space for Chefs Emerson and Wolf to lead the class, while Butler Snow's IT team provided all the tech and organization needed to successfully broadcast the event to all our viewers. The ingredients and the boxes for the meal kits were also donated, allowing Stewpot to use the funds raised solely on its services provided to individuals and families in need of food, shelter, and care.



Participants purchased meal kits for \$150 each, and each meal kit had all the ingredients for red beans and rice to feed eight people. A link to a live Zoom broadcast was sent out to everyone who purchased tickets so that they could cook with Chefs Emerson and Wolf from their own kitchen with family and friends. The community's support and participation was outstanding, as the event was 100% expense-free. All the money raised from ticket sales and BankPlus' Presenting Sponsorship went directly to Stewpot's thirteen ministries.

Although this pandemic has been so difficult for so many, it is heartwarming to know that our community continues to give hope and love to those who need it the most. Stewpot depends on its fundraisers to keep the lights on, make sure people are fed, and provide a warm bed. It takes a village for Stewpot to be able to operate its several ministries, and we could not be more grateful for the network of support we have to make it all possible.

We look forward to the BankPlus Red Beans and Rice Festival returning in 2022 as an in-person event. Stay tuned for more news regarding this event!

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS:

BankPlus

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LONGTIME DIRECTOR OF BILLY BRUMFIELD MEN'S SHELTER RETIRING



Wilbert Logan joined the Stewpot family in June 1999 as the Program Manager at Billy Brumfield and Bus Driver for the children's after-school and summer camp programs. Affectionally known by the children as Mr. Wilbert, he has been a friendly face at Stewpot for over 22 years. Wilbert was promoted to Director of the Billy Brumfield Men's Shelter in 2002 and has served in that role ever since. Stewpot is sad that Wilbert is retiring, but he won't be going far!

Wilbert is staying on part-time as the front desk receptionist. Stewpot is without a doubt a better place because of Wilbert's many years of service.

As the temperature drops, those experiencing homelessness in our city are at great risk.

Here's how Stewpot is responding:

- The Opportunity Center Day Shelter has opened its doors as an emergency shelter, providing a safe place to sleep for neighbors who otherwise would be spending the night in freezing temperatures.
- Stewpot has secured funding from the City of Jackson to place individuals and families in hotel rooms who are unable to be in shelters.
- Numerous volunteers have supplied blankets and warm clothing for us to distribute, as well as warm meals each night that the Opportunity Center is open.
- The Stewpot noon meal, served 365 days of the year, continues to be prepared by Stewpot staff and served by volunteers in the community
- Free COVID testing is available to clients at all of our emergency shelters, as well as at the St. Dominic's Clinic on Stewpot's main campus.

Thank you for helping our neighbors stay warm and fed this winter season!



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By signing up to be a monthly donor at www.stewpot.org, your contribution will immediately be used to help some of the most vulnerable people in and around the Metro area. When you subscribe as a Monthly Partner, you become part of helping us to guarantee:

A hot meal or groceries for people who are hungry • Safe Shelter for those who are homeless and vulnerable • A safe and nurturing environment for over 100 at-risk children and teenagers each year

Become a Monthly Partner Today! It's the easiest and most efficient way to make an impact right now - and for years to come.

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