

STEW POT

FAITH MEETING NEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY



SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

“Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” -Galatians 6:9

Last week, the Clarion Ledger reported online that Jackson had earned the title of “fastest shrinking city in America.” After living through multiple citywide crises in the last year, it was not surprising news...but it was still a gut punch. I love this city, and it hurts to see it suffer.

My family and I live in the city of Jackson. We have the resources to move if necessary. But tens of thousands of our neighbors do not. They live at the mercy of forces largely beyond their control, so they depend heavily on our leaders - local and state - to make wise and fair decisions with them in mind. Sometimes our leaders hit the mark; sometimes they don't.

When hope wanes, I think about this verse from Galatians. It reminds me how much faith and perseverance are needed to grow things. Knowledge and skill can tell you what, when, and where to plant but, as Marge Piercy reminds us in her poem *The Seven of Pentacles*, “you cannot tell always by looking what is happening.” So much happens out of sight and at its own pace. Not all variables can be controlled.

You and I are planting seeds here at Stewpot every day, seeds that require faith and perseverance if we want them to grow. If served with warmth and welcome, lunch can become a time that feeds the soul **as well as** the body. Shelter can become a time that rests both body **and** spirit. Summer camp can be both fun **and** sanctuary. And all this nurturing can produce the rich soil from which growth is inevitable.

But none of this happens overnight. It takes showing up, day after day, with the willingness to be of service, even when it doesn't look like much is happening. Clarissa Pinkola Estes puts it this way: “We know that it does not take ‘everyone on Earth’ to bring justice and peace, but only a small determined group who will not give up during the first, second, or hundredth gale.”

I cannot think of a better way to describe Stewpot's volunteers and donors. Determined. To love. To serve. And to not give up, no matter the obstacle. Thanks be to God for all of you, and for this work of love that we get to do together.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Jill Barnes Buckley, Executive Director



TASTE OF MISSISSIPPI RAISES OVER \$120K FOR STEWPOT

Stewpot's largest annual fundraising event, Taste of Mississippi Presented by Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi, returned for its second year to The District at Eastover on Monday, April 3rd. The event was once again a major success, with an estimated 1,300+ attendees and 60+ volunteers. We are pleased to announce that for the second year in a row, we have beat our fundraising record, raising over \$120,000.

The planning committee is small but mighty. Members of the committee include Chris Eason, Stewpot's Director of Events & Communications, David Browne, Doris Scott, Tony Causey, Tene' Wansley, and Abbey Coombs.

2023 Contestants included Library Lounge, BRAVO!, Sal & Mookie's, Broad Street, The Holy Smokers, Iron Horse Grill, Table 100, Aplos, Tuk Tuk Boom, Saltine, Amerigo, Campbell's Bakery, Chunky Dunks, Eddie Wright BBQ, Hal & Mal's, Highball Lanes, Johnny T's, Logan Farms, Ooh Lala's Bakery, La Cour, Oops All Vegan, Poppy Pies, Scrooge's, St. Dominic Hospital, Sugar's Place, Velvet Bleu Creations, Marlo's Backyard BBQ, and Uniquely Covered.

2023 WINNERS

- BEST APPETIZER:** Oops All Vegan
- BEST ENTREE:** Marlo's Backyard BBQ
- BEST DESSERT:** Velvet Bleu Creations
- BEST PRESENTATION:** Chunky Dunks
- PEOPLE'S CHOICE:** The Holy Smokers

2023 SPONSORS

TITLE SPONSOR

BLUE CROSS & BLUE SHIELD
OF MISSISSIPPI

SILVER SPONSORS

Beckham Custom Jewelry Co
Cathead Vodka
The District at Eastover
Fountain Family Foundation
Nissan North America
Southern Beverage

BRONZE SPONSORS

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Baker Donelson
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Brunini
Cultivation Food Hall
Element Wealth
Hertz Investment Group
Hotel & Restaurant Supply
Independent Roofing Systems
Jones Walker LLP
Origin Bank
Pigott Law Firm PA
Regions Bank
Ross & Yerger Insurance
St. Dominic Hospital
StorageMax
Trio Community Meals
Trustmark

NEW SHOES FILLED AT STEWPOT

Stewpot is pleased to welcome the following staff members to new and returning roles:



Karen Cotton
Clothing Closet
Manager



Cynthia Lynch
Director of
Matt's House



Melissa Young
Food Pantry
Manager



Deborah Vance
Head of
Kitchen Staff

While these staff members recently started their positions, they are by no means new to Stewpot. Karen Cotton has been assisting the Children & Teen's Program with art classes for many years. Cynthia Lynch was previously a Housing Navigator under the Rental Assistance for Mississippians Program (RAMP). Melissa Young was previously a Case Manager for RAMP and for Stewpot's Rapid Rehousing Program. Lastly, Deborah Vance served on the Community Kitchen Staff from 1997 until the early 2000s and has long-called Stewpot family. We are so glad to have these familiar faces join us at Stewpot!

CELEBRATING SERVICE

For the past several months, Stewpot has been blessed to have Anna Milsap and Josia Kaemper as part of the Stewpot family. Anna and Josia are participants in the Mennonite Mission Network's Service Adventure program. This 10 month program is for young adults who serve select nonprofit agencies and connect with a supporting church congregation.



"The biggest lesson that I hope to take with me is that every single person I encounter is worthy of love and care solely because they are made in the image of God. My favorite part of being at Stewpot is all of the wonderful people I get to work with on a daily basis."
-Anna Milsap

Anna and Josia have served in the Food Pantry, Community Kitchen, Clothing Closet, and the After-School Program for Kids and Teens. These two hard-working, compassionate young people have made such a difference here at Stewpot, and they will be greatly missed when they return home this month.



"I've really enjoyed the kindness of everyone we are working with. Everyone we've met is so friendly to us and that makes me happy every day. I've never experienced a day where I went home with a bad mood, because everyone is happy to see me and I'm happy to see them."
-Josia Kaemper

FOOD PANTRY NEED INCREASES

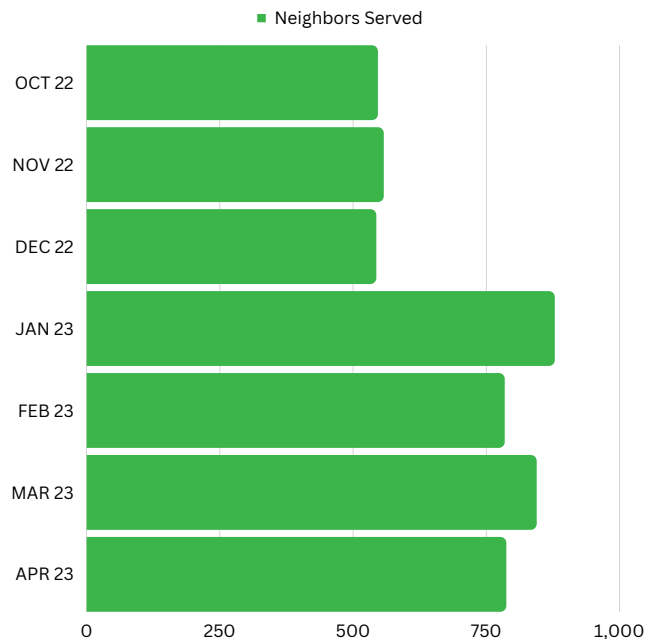
Requests for help are surging at food pantries across the country now that pandemic assistance has ended. Inflation is the primary driver, as people are spending more money and getting fewer groceries.

As you can imagine, Stewpot's Food Pantry has been hopping, too. As you can see from the adjoining graphic, our numbers have gone up and are staying up.

Because we know that the summer presents extra challenges for households that are food insecure, **Stewpot has**

decided to open our Food Pantry on Thursday afternoons from 4pm to 7pm for the months of June, July, and August. We are hoping to fill that critical afternoon gap, when most services have already shut down but supper still needs to be put on the table.

How can you help provide food for households in need? Can you organize a food drive around an event that's already happening, like a birthday party or a 4th of July gathering? Perhaps you can organize a food drive in your workplace or congregation? If neither of these work for you (summer is so busy!), please consider giving through our website. Let us know you want the donation to go toward buying food for the pantry and we'll get it done.



FOOD PANTRY URGENT NEEDS

- Baked beans
- Pork n beans
- Lima beans
- Black eyed peas
- Cream corn
- Crackers
- Cornmeal
- Canned chicken
- Hormel meals
- Butter
- Macaroni & cheese
- Canned spam
- Instant potatoes
- Canned soups
- Hamburger helper
- Chicken helper
- Canned salmon
- Gravy packets
- Margarine
- Cheese

A complete list of food pantry needs can be found at stewpot.org/need

FRESH FRUITS & VEGGIES NEEDED

CONTACT US TO DONATE!

(601) 353-2759

cmcnealy@stewpot.org



STEW POT SUMMER CAMP FOR KIDS AND TEENS

For the past 32 years, Stewpot's Summer Camp has rooted some of our city's most at-risk youth in the rich soil of Stewpot's loving community. It has been a safe place for kids to grow up and for teens to show up as themselves.

We are excited to welcome 110 campers to Stewpot this summer. Nearly all of our campers come from families who cannot afford to pay for camp. But because we rely heavily on volunteers and donations, we can offer a seven-week camp for only \$375 per child.

If you would like to sponsor a camper for Stewpot Summer Camp, please mail donations to:

Stewpot Community Services
Attn: Summer Camp
P.O. Box 3691
Jackson, MS 39207



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FAITH MEETING NEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY



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Don't forget that 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!

BECOME A MONTHLY PARTNER TODAY!

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

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