



NEWS & VIEWS

FALL 2009

CLIENT PROFILE:

Believe in Me

When Darleen completed a local rehabilitation program in 1991, which included 12-step meetings and counseling, she assumed her life would take a positive turn. However, she was not prepared for the loss of her mother in 1999; and unfortunately, the recovering addict's life spun into turmoil. In an effort to return her life to stability, Darleen erroneously turned to romance.

"I met a man and thought we had the same goals. Like me he was clean and sober, and I thought we were going to have a life together," Darleen remembers. Unfortunately, this feeling of elation did not last long, as the partner soon relapsed and dragged Darleen into addiction once again. Soon after, physical abuse began, although Darleen admits that she also participated in the violence. Bouts of heroine and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, and prison stays ensued.

Finally, Darleen decided she had had enough. She sought help through the Coalition's Women's Residential and Counseling Center (WRCC).

"I realized that I didn't want that anymore... and I reached out. I called WRCC; they saw the bruises and saw that I was hurting...They made a bed available and I moved in." Darleen's road to true recovery had begun.

During her time at WRCC, Darleen was assigned a case manager who worked with her to create an individualized plan to return to self-sufficiency. For Darleen, that plan included encouragement to continue working, the opportunity to attend education courses through the Coalition's on-site Orange County Public Schools LifeStrides program, and the ability to attend support groups and counseling through the Coalition's VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) program. At the time, the Coalition did not have a formalized women's substance abuse recovery program, so Darleen was encouraged to attend local 12-step program meetings, which she gladly did. The mix of services gave Darleen the hand-up she needed to work on her recovery.

"Because of my desire to move forward and excel, the Coalition...helped me to realize that I can succeed, and I did," Darleen smiles broadly. "I am now a proud, productive person, and I am happy."

Although Darleen speaks highly of the staff and programs at the Coalition, she believes her greatest benefit was actually the support she received while there. Her primary sources of encouragement were from Ms. Brenda Baisden, the adult education teacher in LifeStrides; from Cynthia, a wonderful friend she gained while at WRCC; and from the VOCA support group.



Darleen first met Ms. Brenda when she began attending the LifeStrides classroom. Under her teacher's recommendation, Darleen attended a local technical institution to gain a certificate as a Help Desk Analyst and also took an accounting course. LifeStrides provided support for the cost of books and tuition, and Darleen attributes her desire to do well in school to Ms. Brenda's constant encouragement.

Cynthia, Darleen's friend from WRCC, was also a source of significant support. Both women entered the Coalition's WRCC program with the intention of straightening out their lives, but neither expected to gain lifelong friendships from the program. Today, Darleen speaks with pride about her friend's accomplishments and enthusiastically confirms that they are still friends.

Finally, Darleen also credits the VOCA support group at WRCC with providing her invaluable life lessons. Through this group, she learned to move beyond the past to forgive others and herself. This has enabled Darleen, as she says, to "Stand up, be a woman, and move forward."

Darleen now has her own apartment and has worked using the education she received at the Coalition. Though she is currently between jobs, Darleen is confident that the skills she gained in her time at the Coalition will help her land a job in her desired field of business. Her ultimate goal, whether through a career or volunteer work, is to aid others with pasts similar to hers. To accomplish this, Darleen has begun volunteering in jail programs and even helps tutor students seeking their GEDs while incarcerated.

"I want them to know that they don't have to live like that. If you have someone who is really interested in you, you can succeed. The Coalition did that for me, and I want to do that for someone else." Darleen's passion is evident in her bright smile, and we at the Coalition have no doubt that she is capable of achieving her dreams.

Inside this issue:

- Client Profile.....1
- Letter from the President..2
- Kids Corner.....3
- Cause for Fun.....4
- Featured Volunteer.....5
- News in Brief.....6
- Inside the Agency.....7

And so much more!

CONNECT WITH THE COALITION!



Visit our website at www.centralfloridahomeless.org to find links to the Coalition on Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, WordPress, and YouTube.

We look forward to connecting with you!

2010 Calendars are now available!



See page 4 for a closer look and more information.



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The front page of CNN's website Thursday evening, November 19th read: "BREAKING NEWS: OPRAH TO END HERTALK SHOW IN 2011." Wow! Oprah's business decision to cease production of her popular talk show rises to the level of a hospital's call for code blue or the Department of Homeland Security's decision to raise the threat level to orange (whatever that means). The Queen of Talk stops talking and it is breaking news. No doubt Oprah has been – and is – a major influence in our culture and can determine the demise or success of one's future. Just ask James Frey of *A Million Little Pieces* fame or Phil McGraw of Dr. Phil fame. Love her or hate her, she has made her mark.

But it is amazing how far and wide we look for breaking news. How about this: "COMMUNITY RESPONDS IN GENEROUS PROPORTIONS TO GROWING NEEDS OF THOSE FACING HOMELESSNESS." You may have missed hearing about it because of the pressing nature of what is happening in Oprah World. The holiday season is at its peak at Coalition for the Homeless and we are overwhelmed by the generosity of those who have reached out to help, especially during these difficult economic times. Once again, our community made sure the nearly 200 children we serve each night will have gifts to open on Christmas morning. Holiday parties, candy and volunteers in festive attire all spread good cheer in an effort to ensure those caught in the crisis of homelessness will have reason to celebrate.

And there's more breaking news. The community continues to generously support our work through sacrificial giving. Stories regularly surface of those who, even with their personal and severe financial crisis, still give and see it as an investment in the lives of others and our services.

We have much to celebrate and be thankful for this season. You may not have seen it headlined on the CNN website, but you are the breaking news. The generosity of those in need is being met because of you....and that's something to headline!


President/CEO



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Charles Tews, Chairman, Tews Company
Dana Loncar, Vice Chairman, Consensus Communications
Timothy R. Baker, Secretary, Baker Barrios Architects, Inc.
John E. Hearn, Treasurer, Orlando Utilities Commission
Brent A. Trotter, President/CEO, Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida, Inc.

John Alvarez, Orange Lake Resorts
Christopher Annunziato, Holland & Knight LLP
Carlos A. Barrios, PE, Florida Retail Development
Bakari F. Burns, Heath Care Center for the Homeless, Inc.
Brian Buwalda, Graham, Cottrill, Jackson & Hostetter, LLP
Betsy Culpepper, Arnold Palmer Medical Center
Sylvia Doggett-Jones, Darden Restaurants, Inc.
Sharon F. Donoghue, Orange County Government
Tracey L. Ellerson, Baker Hostetler LLP
Glenn M. Fournier, Fournier & Associates, Inc.
David C. Grimm, Universal Orlando
Trevor Larsen, PE, Walt Disney Parks and Resorts U.S.
Alex Martins, Orlando Magic
William F. Mitchell, First Baptist Church of Orlando
John P. Moskos, Bank of America
Walter R. Nason, GrayRobinson, P.A.
Elena H. Norman, Hilton Grand Vacations
Laura L. Pooser, Community Volunteer
John D. Ruffier, Lowndes Drosdick Doster Kantor & Reed, P.A.
Randy E. Schimmelpfennig, Morgan & Morgan, P.A.
Scott R. Stahley, Lincoln Property Company of Florida, Inc.
Trip Stephens, ZOM, Inc.
Barbara Larson Stuart, CMO Strategic Marketing
Holly Vanture, Downtown South Main Street
Bill L. Warren, Reedy Creek Improvement District
Thomas J. Wilkes, GrayRobinson, P.A.
Brian T. Wilson, Dellecker Wilson King McKenna & Ruffier, LLP
Harold W. Worrall, PhD, PE, Transportation Innovations, Inc.
James D. Wright, PhD, University of Central Florida
Donna C. Zeitler, Averett Warmus Durkee

Notice our newsletter's new look?

If you have comments or suggestions, send an email to coalition@cflhomeless.org. We would love to hear from you!

KIDS CORNER

In October 2003, Coalition volunteers and representatives from the Central Florida arts, business, and education communities came up with an unconventional idea: they wanted to create a program that would expose homeless children at the Coalition to the arts in a way that would allow them to express themselves and increase self-esteem. The resulting Art By Coalition Children (ABCs) program enabled children to do just that.

"I feel proud of myself because I am succeeding at things I've never done before. It's a surprise that I can actually do it! If I'm feeling sad that day and know...I can achieve something, it makes me feel better," explains Jesus, a 12-year-old former participant in the program.

ABCs pairs professional artists in the community with children at the Coalition, allowing them a number of one-night-a-week sessions to teach their mediums to an eager bunch of budding artists. A variety of art forms have been represented throughout the program, including photography, music, pottery, filmmaking, acting, poetry, and puppetry. The program can increase children's self-esteem by offering them a safe place to express themselves and to explore the world in which they live. Not surprisingly, much of the children's artwork is centered on life at the Coalition.



ABCs artwork has been displayed in many venues throughout Central Florida, including Rollins College, Orlando City Hall, the Winter Park Arts Festival, the Orlando International Airport ArtPort Gallery, and Walt Disney World's "Festival of the Masters" at Downtown Disney. Recently, the Orange County Regional History Center included a special display of ABCs photography in conjunction with the *Looking East* exhibit, a photographic exhibition from renowned photographer Steve McCurry. The children were invited to a special open house event for their exhibit and were thrilled to be featured alongside such a notable artist.

If you are interested in getting involved with the ABCs program, send an email to ABCs@cflhomeless.org. Volunteer opportunities are available for artists and for caring folks who want to lend a helping hand.



BECAUSE OF YOU

Over 70% of the Coalition's resources come from individuals, businesses, faith-based groups, special events & other private sector sources.

Newsletter published by the
Communications Department
407-426-1260

Muffet Robinson
Shari Orr

Director of Communications
Communications Specialist

**All photos provided by or to the Coalition for the Homeless.*

Program support provided in part by:



CAUSE FOR FUN

Order your 2010 Coalition Calendar today!



For only a **\$12 donation**, you can own one of the Coalition's first-ever calendars! As if the powerful photographs and eye-opening information aren't enticing enough, each month includes a **coupon for the brand-new 4Rivers Smokehouse** in Winter Park, Florida. Impact the people around you and satisfy your stomach for an entire year, all while helping provide critical support for homeless men, women and children!

For more information, call 407.426.1256 or email lisa.washington2@cflhomeless.org.

Happy Holidays and thank you for supporting this worthy cause!

WANNA KEEP IN TOUCH?

Visit www.centralfloridahomeless.org to sign up for our new email communication and receive the latest news



STILL NEED HOLIDAY CARDS?

Order packs of 10 cards for \$20 from the Coalition and support your neighbors in need!

Call **407.426.1259** for more information.

Coalition for the Homeless ANNUAL CELEBRATION



An Evening with the Men in Blue

Thursday, January 21, 2010

6:30 p.m. – 9:45 p.m.

Universal Orlando CityWalk

6050 Universal Blvd.

Orlando, FL 32819

Join us for *An Evening with the Men in Blue* to pay tribute to the Orlando Magic organization for over 15 years of dedicated support of the Coalition for the Homeless and to recognize their extraordinary contributions to the community!

Presented by Baker Hostetler LLP, this exciting event will feature an exclusive show by Blue Man Group. The evening will begin with a celebratory reception hosted by NBA City Restaurant, followed by the creative and unforgettable entertainment of the world renowned Blue Man Group on their local home stage at the Sharp Aquos Theatre.

Sponsorship opportunities are available at varying levels with exciting benefits, starting at only \$150 for an individual ticket! Contact Debbie Leon at 407.426.1265 or debbie.leon@cflhomeless.org for more information.



FEATURED VOLUNTEER

At significant times in our lives, we experience great triumphs or troubles that can be defined as truly life-changing. For University of Central Florida student Tremayne Sirmons, being diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes last winter was one of those moments. At the age of 25, his aspiration to become a successful civil engineer became less important, and he began taking a serious look at his life.

"I went through this phase where I felt like life went downhill...I ended up taking two weeks off of work and in those two weeks I decided to do a lot of volunteer work," Tremayne explains.

His new commitment to community service brought the aspiring volunteer to Coalition for the Homeless with Concord Street Church of Christ, whose members serve a meal once a month in the Center for Women and Families. Tremayne quickly became enthralled with the organization and knew that serving once a month was not enough to satisfy him. He began seeking ways to become more involved, the first step of which was attending a volunteer orientation.

"After the orientation, I was hooked," Tremayne remembers. "I still had no idea what I could actually do here; I only have so much money and so much time...so I decided to just start coming on Saturdays."

Tremayne quickly discovered that Saturdays at the Coalition are often bustling with activities, from monthly birthday parties for the children and a program called "Reading Buddies" (both of which are sponsored by Hands On Orlando) to pick-up games of basketball. This dedicated volunteer has been at the Coalition nearly every Saturday and has found ways to entertain the children even when no events are scheduled, such as bringing a movie and snacks.

Looking back at how his life has changed since being diagnosed with diabetes nearly a year ago, Tremayne marvels at the difference in his perspective.

"Once you come in and start volunteering, it just becomes a habit," he explains with a grin. "You get to know some of the kids and their families, and it just becomes second nature to come in, hang out, and see what you can do to help out."

Tremayne is certain that he will continue volunteering in the future and hopes to be able to convince many others in his community to give of their time as well. In particular, he hopes that sharing his experience as a Coalition volunteer will show others that homelessness is not what they expect.

"Sometimes we forget that homelessness is just a label...that it doesn't define anyone. You can't sit back and say 'I will never be that person' because there are just some things in life that will cause you to realize anything can happen," he admonishes. "That's how I look at my illness."

Although Tremayne is modest about his involvement at the Coalition, he does express hope that his small acts of service will improve the lives of Coalition clients. He credits family and friends with aiding him through a difficult time in his life, and he hopes that, through volunteering, he can provide that type of support for another neighbor in need.

DID YOU KNOW?

Last fiscal year, the Coalition's Women's Residential and Counseling Center (WRCC) program received over 3,200 crisis calls on the 24-hour Crisis Hotline.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Fifteen-year-old Jesse Leimgruber chose to collect items from the Coalition's immediate needs list for his Eagle Scout project. His efforts resulted in a small truckload of generators, bottled water, flashlights, nonperishable food items, and tarps for use at our facilities in case of an emergency. Jesse (right) is pictured with fellow Scout Douglas Mactye.



The Coalition's fully-licensed daycare hosted a Trike-A-Thon to raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, a charity that provides treatment to children regardless of the family's ability to pay. Coalition staff and clients cheered as the children rode by on decorated trikes and toy cars.



On August 28th, 20 Coalition clients graduated from the Employability Skills Training Class, provided by the Coalition's on-site Goodwill Industries Employment Specialist. This program enhances clients' opportunities to become gainfully employed by offering mock interviews and teaching methods of completing an application and managing an interview.



As part of Heart of Florida United Way's Days of Caring campaign, FDG Creative staff served breakfast in the Coalition's Men's Pavilion on September 25th. Starting their service before dawn, this Orlando-based advertising agency joined over 1,700 community members in the region's largest community-wide volunteer event. Other groups worked throughout the day to complete many projects in the community.



Share Our Strength's (SOS) 20th Anniversary Taste of the Nation Orlando took place on August 29th, raising over \$140,000 to fight childhood hunger. Nearly 1,800 people enjoyed the delicious food prepared by over 30 of Central Florida's leading restaurants, live music by local band Crash Reality, a silent auction of unique items, and a drawing for great prizes. The local beneficiaries of this premier culinary benefit are Coalition for the Homeless and Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida.

GRANTS RECEIVED

Target
 Harry P. Leu Foundation
 The Wachovia Foundation
 Wallace Family Foundation
 The Jim Moran Foundation
 Drusilla Farwell Foundation
 Heart of Florida United Way
 Victims of Crime Act Program
 Publix Super Markets Charities

Orlando Area Trust for the Homeless
 The Chesley G. Magruder Foundation
 City of Orlando Citizens' Review Panel
 Orange County Citizens' Review Panel
 Central Florida Women's Resource Center
 Orlando Sentinel Family Fund - Holiday, a fund of McCormick Foundation

Bob Allen Outstanding Community Service Award
 City of Orlando Community Development Block Grant
 Orange County Community Development Block Grant
 Orange County Emergency Shelter Grant



GET INVOLVED!

Is your family, company, religious organization, or social group looking for a unique opportunity to lend a helping hand to a neighbor in need? Serving a meal at one of the Coalition's three facilities is one of the most rewarding ways to give back to your community. Last year, the Coalition served almost 300,000 meals to hungry men, women, and children and we could not accomplish this enormous task without the support of the Central Florida community!

Interested groups can sign up for either a one-time service or a recurring schedule to serve meals for clients in the Center for Women and Families, Women's Residential and Counseling Center, or Men's Pavilion. They will have the choice of providing and preparing the meal according to federal nutritional guidelines (provided) or underwriting the cost of the meal. Underwriting costs range from \$170 to \$500 between the facilities. A minimum of three to ten volunteers is needed, but more volunteers are always welcome!

To find out how you can become involved in this rewarding opportunity, please email coalition@cfhomeless.org for more information.3.

INSIDE THE AGENCY

As one of the major contributors to homelessness, substance abuse can prove detrimental for individuals who are striving to return to independence. To combat this issue and aid addicted clients in achieving both self-sufficiency and sobriety, the Coalition offers the First Steps Substance Abuse Recovery Program, an intensive program with several components.

The first component is the unique First Steps Shelter Recovery Program for Men. With separate quarters in the Men's Pavilion, this residential rehabilitation program has served over 1,000 men, enabling clients to take initial steps toward self-sufficiency and sobriety. Services within the four-month-minimum program include case management, addiction support groups, life skills classes, educational and vocational training, employability skills instruction, and mental health and medical referrals.

After observing the success of this first substance abuse recovery program, the Coalition desired to offer the same vital services to single women. This aspiration led to the creation of the First Steps Shelter Recovery Program for Women in March 2009. Located within the Center for Women and Families, this component is modeled after the men's program. For approximately four months, participants work on their recovery in conjunction with Specialized Treatment, Education & Prevention Services Inc. (STEPS), an off-site substance abuse facility. They also utilize many of the same services as do the First Steps men. Those who complete the program are eligible for transitional housing at our Women's Residential and Counseling Center (WRCC).

In addition to maintaining these two programs, the Coalition received funding in August 2009 to officially launch the First Steps Transitional Housing Program, a novel initiative designed to offer recovering male addicts the next stage toward independence. Transitional housing is provided in the Coalition's nine on-site apartments for up to 32 men, all of whom have successfully completed the First Steps Shelter Recovery Program for Men or a similar program and are recovering from their addictions. A six to eight month program, First Steps Transitional Housing offers clients the opportunity to grow in their recovery, discuss real life issues, learn relapse prevention techniques, and benefit from group support.

The goal of these programs is to assist clients in maintaining a clean and sober lifestyle by offering a framework that helps them do so. By teaching the traits necessary for abstinence and reintegration into the community, the Coalition enables its clients to move from addiction and homelessness into self-sufficiency and sobriety.



Some of the former First Steps Transitional Housing clients relax in front of their temporary homes.



639 W. Central Blvd.
Orlando, FL 32801
407-426-1250
www.centralfloridahomeless.org

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage

PAID

Orlando, FL
Permit #2580

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Below are items we need to serve our clients. Please call **407-849-2754** for more information and drop-off times.

Client Supplies

- Tissues
- First-aid supplies
- Good Start baby formula
- Personal hygiene supplies
- Diapers (sizes 3 – 6 and all pull-ups)
- Twin-size mattress covers and sheets
- Towels/washcloths (new or gently used and clean)
- Gift cards to Target, Wal-Mart and Publix for emergency items

Operational Supplies

- Ice machine
- Laundry detergent
- Dishwashing detergent and dish soap
- General office supplies (pens, tape, staples)
- Paper towels, plates, napkins, and cups (8 – 10 oz.)
- Cleaning supplies (garbage bags, brooms, bleach, etc.)
- Gift cards to Lowe's and Home Depot for maintenance supplies
- Gift cards to Office Depot and Staples for office supplies

INSIGHTS from a Coalition volunteer

I was at the volunteer orientation this Saturday and was very impressed and inspired by your passion and dedication, and by the selflessness of so many people who give their time and resources to help tragically unfortunate people.

After the first step on the grounds I felt wiser and better for it; I was seeing a world that I had never considered. I've been fortunate enough in my life that homelessness has never crossed my mind. Like most people, I dismissed the homeless as people with addictions, or lack of motivation and education. I felt these people would be hardened, cynical, and apathetic, but on all accounts I was mistaken.

During your talk you mentioned how flexible and creative volunteer opportunities can be, so I thought I would tell you my skills and we could come up with something together....Really, anything you need I am willing to help...My goal is to serve, to help, and to learn more about myself in the process. Thank you, and I hope to see you soon!

- Javi Calderon, Coalition volunteer