



HELPING HANDS CLINIC NEWSLETTER

Spring 2012

“There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore, I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.”
Deuteronomy 15:11

CREETINGS...

The volunteers of the Helping Hands Clinic continue to provide health care to the homeless poor in our area every Monday and Thursday evening. The Clinic continues to operate from the First United Methodist Church in downtown Gainesville. We appreciate the support we've received from “First” Church and from Annette Pendergrass, the District Superintendent of the North Central Florida District of the United Methodist Church. The psychosocial component of the Thursday night women's program, the Spa, continues to use the second floor space above the District Superintendent's office. We are averaging 35 women each Thursday in this program where they enjoy a meal, showers and the chance to “shop” for clothes and personal care products. The

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women are provided with educational presentations, craft classes and the chance to just relax in a safe, secure and clean environment.

The most recent (January 2012) point in time survey conducted by the Hungry and Homeless Coalition of Alachua County found 2,094 individuals self reporting homelessness. This total represented an increase of 300 individuals over last year's count of 1,781. Of this 2,094, 53% (1107) fell in the category of “homeless on the street” which represented an increase of 449 over last year. Unfortunately the number of shelter beds remains constant which results in more individuals on the street.

THE CHILDREN RESPOND...

Once again students at the Cornerstone Academy worked to fill and donate over 100 Valentine Day bags which were distributed to patients being treated on Monday and Thursday nights. We also received white socks that were filled with personal hygiene items and

“goodies” by the Elves of Ms. Walton's First Grade Class at Kimball-Wiles Elementary School. It is an honor and delight to see the efforts made by these children to help meet the needs of those less fortunate.



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION...

April has become known as Volunteer Appreciation Month. Helping Hands has been blessed over the years with a great, dedicated group of individuals who volunteer their time and talent to provide much needed health care services to those who have so little yet need so much. In 2011, the clinic's all volunteer staff included 27 MD/RN's 19 of whom were Psychiatrists, 10 Nurse Practitioners, 1 Physician's Assistant, 15 Ro, 1 Acupuncture Physician and 1 Massage Therapist. Forty additional volunteers assisted

with Sovereign Immunity screenings, dental and eye care referrals, operation of the clothing closet and the provision of meals and refreshments. A total of 3,972 volunteer hours were contributed at an estimated value of \$304,660. These volunteers served 496 different patients in 3,439 clinic visits. Volunteers are the heart, soul and hands of Helping Hands; without them the clinic and its services wouldn't exist. **"Thank you" to a great group of folks!**



Alice and Sarah serving a meal

Just a few of the great group of folks that volunteer for Helping Hands...



Michelle RN helping a client



Cassidy preparing hygiene products



Zenith, Misty and Crystal ready to meet and greet clients

Volunteers are not paid --- not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.

Donations can be dropped off at the Clinic Mon.-Thurs.
Arrangements can be made for pick up by calling Alice at 352-519-5542.

Tax deductible financial donations may be made to

Helping Hands Clinic
2603 NW 13th St # 306
Gainesville, FL 32609

Special needs items at this time are towels, wash cloths, sheets, pillows, & backpacks.

More Than A Clothes Closet - It's a Boutique!

By Ann Bryan & Dianne Walsh

The Helping Hands Women's Program seeks to offer a brief respite from the unimaginable difficulties of being a homeless woman in Gainesville. The blessings of being in a safe place, sharing a healthy meal, receiving compassionate medical care, enjoying a hot shower and changing into clean clothes selected from our shelves of donated items are greatly valued and appreciated. Realizing the importance of these things, the volunteers in the "clothes closet" started sharing ideas of how to make this room more attractive, welcoming, and relaxing. We scouted our homes, thrift shops and discount stores, donating a variety of items that has resulted in renaming our "clothes closet" the *"Helping Hands Women's Boutique"*. If you were to visit the "Boutique" now you'll find:

- Low warm light; music; flowers; a wall clock; fans, a throw rug; a full-length mirror and a bowl of candy;
- Clean and stylish clothing in good repair;



- Items neatly organized and sorted;
- Greater choices of personal items;
- Volunteers wearing name tags so clients and volunteers come to know each other;
- A shelf of "free" items from which to chose – note paper, cards, cosmetics, etc.
- A manicure area for clients to do their nails.
- Special days to give away items such as perfume, jewelry, hand knitted hats and scarfs, blankets or Holiday Bags.

We believe the atmosphere sends important messages – we care; you count; organization is important. We strive to be fair but firm, yet willingly adjust for special needs. Rules are clear and followed, however exceptions are made as needed.

We are so thankful for your donations of clothing and personal items. We invite you to visit the *"Helping Hands Women's Boutique"* and see the difference your help makes in improving the lives of the homeless women in our community.





Mailing Address:

2603 NW 13th St # 306
Gainesville FL 32609

Physical Address:

419 NE First Street
Gainesville, FL 32601

Web Address:

<http://hhcg.org/>

Telephone:

352-519-5542

Reflections...A DIFFERENT KIND OF "WINE"

It was a Monday evening in clinic when a long term client, Tommy, came in, saying, "Randy I got bad news, real bad news, Randy". I said, "what is it Tommy"? He said, "its Wine, Randy, he's dead. He got hit on his bike Saturday morning, in front of the bank". That's how I heard that Henry Ray aka "Wine" had died. I first met Henry 20 years ago when the clinic was based at the Salvation Army Lodge on E. University Ave. Over the years he'd come and go from the clinic receiving treatment for various problems.

In the late 1990's we had a medical student volunteering with us who thought that the homeless should be given an opportunity to give something back to the community. So, he started the "Clean Team" which was composed of volunteer clinic clients who were given t-shirts, gloves and trash bags. The student, Sam, would lead the group out into the surrounding community to pick up trash from the streets. After an hour or so, they would come back to the clinic for a meal donated by local restaurants. The atmosphere at dinner was very special. It reflected a group who

felt good about doing something useful. The "Clean Team" was recognized by Keep Alachua Co. Beautiful and remained active for over 5 years. Henry Ray was awarded the #1 Clean Teamers' award in 2000 for helping out 24 times over the previous 2 years. He was surprised and pleased to be recognized.

Yes, Henry enjoyed his favorite beverage and yes he would talk to anyone about anything. But he also cared enough to give back to the community, which he did for years. The last time I saw "Wine" was a few weeks ago at the Street Side Breakfast at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, where he was one of the regulars. One whose smiling face and happy greeting will be missed by many.

