



STOP AND SMELL THE SNOWFLAKES

We are rapidly approaching the holiday season. Stores are already blaring Christmas carols; Santas, greenery, and red ribbon greet us all through our daily commutes. Sale fliers promoting *the* toy for this Christmas are crammed into our mailboxes and newspapers. Sometimes the “cheer” can be a bit overwhelming. This is the time where we as individuals sometimes struggle to slow down and remember the reason for the season. Through all of the holiday hubbub and the neon flashing lights, it is often easy to miss the need all around us. We may throw some change to a bell ringer or drop a little something extra in the collection plate but do we really stop and listen to the world around us. Most of the time life lets us just slide through our routines as we hustle along, but every once in a while something goes off in front of our face, loud and bright enough that we cannot ignore it.

“Well, we are not poor...” she said, “we just are having some problems” Her young family was one of thousands displaced by the hurricanes that battered the Gulf Coast. They had come here to Mid-Missouri to get their feet back under them. They had not been in need of assistance before, they were living fine making their way until Mother Nature decided to remind us how violent she can be. She was right; her family is not the stereotypical face of poverty that so many in America hold. They are just on a

slippery slope that many find themselves facing. A situation that completely wipes out the comfort level and leaves people looking for help. Sometimes that help is a quick fix of financial assistance to get back on a level field while waiting for the paychecks to start again. Sometimes it is food to keep money available for other needs.

“I just need some clothes for my daughter, we had a fire and lost everything...” Struggling not to break down and cry she came looking for help, something she had not done before. She needed to make sure that her little girl was safe, and that meant asking for help. She was clearly uncomfortable with asking, not wanting to take something someone else might need more. She searched for

clothing for the little girl and was overjoyed when a baby doll was given to her. “Everything is just gone, we hardly found anything after the fire.” She was talking out loud, but was speaking as much to herself as to those helping, still in shock from her sudden plight.

Real life happens every day no matter if we slow down to watch it or not. It is often all too easy to get caught in our routine and forget that the world around us. When you throw in Christmas Cards, shopping for gifts and holiday meals, getting our homes decorated and ready for the holiday, and all the other extras faced this time of year the situation only worsens. **CONTINUED PAGE 2**

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

Looking for something to do for the Holidays? The Samaritan Center has much going on around town. December 2nd is the Samaritan Center open house. Come join us for a bite to eat and see the Samaritan Center. Our staff will be waiting to greet you and take you through tours of the facilities. This is a great opportunity to visit with others in the community and see where your support goes to. Open house runs from 4:00-6:00 PM Friday December 2nd. Also that same evening the Samaritan Center will be participating in Living Windows in Downtown Jefferson City. Living Windows begins at 6:00 in the evening, so you can head right there after enjoying our open house!

There are still families in need of adoption. If your family, business, or group would be interested in adopting a family contact us right away at 634-7776. There is also information available on our website: www.midmosamartian.org. Senior citizens in the area are also available for holiday

adoption. Another program still in need of support is Santa's Workshop where new toys are distributed to children in need. Toys collected go to children age 13 and under whose families were not adopted. We ask that toys be new and around \$10.00 in value.

The holiday season is a great time of year to get connected with the needs of those less fortunate. There are seasonal reminders all around to help us get in the mood and it is a season that presents many needs to those who may be struggling to get by. Extra expenses of holiday shopping, children eating at home while there is no school, increased electrical and heating costs as the weather turns cold, all of these are little factors that help to pile up on what is often already a precarious budget. When you give to any of the holiday programs the Samaritan Center offers, you are giving to your community. All of our services stay here in Mid-Missouri.

COME SEE THE BALLET

Dancers Alley will be presenting a special dress rehearsal performance of *The Nutcracker* on Saturday December 17th. Funds raised from the performance will benefit the Samaritan Center. The performance will begin at 1:00PM and will be held at the new Miller Performing Arts Center. The Nutcracker, a true holiday classic, is a joy for all ages. Take this opportunity to view local talent and help out a good cause in the process. Tickets are five dollars and can be obtained through Dancers Alley. Call 635-6610 for more information.

SNOWFLAKES

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Stop sometime and remember the whole reason for all these things, for all these Santas, trees, turkeys, and holly. The reason is a displaced family, traveling due to events beyond their control found shelter where they could and one baby, who did not come into the world with neon lights and fanfare, was born. Stop and remember that baby. Look around. How many modern day Mary's do you see, struggling to make the trip. She might be in the checkout lane in front of you, struggling to keep her children calm long enough to count out the exact change. She may be on the side of the road with the hood of her car up pleading with it to just get her home. She may be

sitting beside you at work, quietly hiding her anxiety over how she will pay for the children's gifts

So many of us are a few steps from the same boat. How many paychecks could you miss? What would a house fire leave you with? It really does not take much. So don't begrudge that family that is making too much noise. Hold the door for that mother and her four children. Take some time to see beyond your own shopping list, beyond your own needs and see what is all around you.

MARYLYN'S MESSAGE

An Ordinary Thursday

Folks that do not volunteer at the Center often inquire, "What do you do all day?" so let me share a Thursday with you.

We start arriving at 7:30 am and open the doors, click on all the computers, make coffee and answer the phone that is already ringing. "Yes we are open for pantry services at 9:30 until 11:30 and again this afternoon from 4:00 until 6:00 pm. Yes, the medical clinic is open tonight. No, you do not need an appointment however, you cannot have Medicaid or health insurance in order to be seen. Yes this is the second Thursday and Dr. Case will be seeing anyone with diabetes. You have a toothache? Then you need to come in and make an appointment and on it goes." It's 8 o'clock and Carlos is stocking pantry shelves with nutritious foods that have been so generously given by the community to provide our families in need with a balanced diet. The warehouse buzzer is sounding and it's a bread volunteer who has picked up day old bread from a local store for the pantry. Colleen is opening the door for the dental patients who have 8:00 appointments. Other friends line up outside the front door waiting for the pantry to open at 9:30. The ladies who sort, inventory and stock the clothing room have arrived and are very busy. Volunteers are arriving to work at their various tasks. They stop by the break room for coffee and conversation before we all meet in the pantry at 9:15 to start our day off with prayer. In our large circle we pray for volunteers that are sick, family members our military, our donors, each other and our friends that come to us in need. After the Our Father announcements are made and this small army takes their posts. The telephone receptionist wants to know if we have any rent or utility money available that day. We say, not much but send the calls to Jackie. Throughout the morning needs are discussed and something is given if at all possible. It's ten o'clock one of our volunteer attorneys is interviewing a grandmother who wants guardianship over her grandchild so she can enroll him in school. The lawyer's office will magically transform back to a medical exam room at 4:00pm. In the middle of all this Carlos brings a young single mom to my office in tears. She is carrying her 15 month old daughter. Her home was destroyed by fire the night before and she lost all of her earthly possessions. "Do you have any clothes for my daughter and maybe some diapers and a toy? I cannot afford to buy anything." We run like chicks in a yard and find warm clothes, diapers, a baby blanket and two new toys. She is going to St. Louis to live with her mother and where she can start out fresh. It is now 11:15 am and 7th grade students from IC School fill our community room. In their religion class they are studying social justice and are here to interview one of our friends about how it feels to be poor and powerless. By now it is 12:30 and 73 families have been interviewed by our intake volunteers as to their financial situation and what foods and other services that may need. For some it is a refill on a prescription, another it's an ID so they can get a job, others may need a voucher for gasoline to get to a doctors appointment in Columbia. Some are worried about Christmas toys for their kids since they came in too late for Christmas adoption. We tell them they can come to Santa's Workshop when it opens in December and pick out two new toys for each of their children. All the families are so grateful and over and over you hear "Thank You and God bless you." Having a place to go to get food and clothes for their children and themselves is such a blessing. It is now 12:45 pm and the second shift of dentists has arrived to work with Marijane and Kim until 3:00pm. Some of us leave and collapse over lunch. But at 1:45pm we are back to restock the pantry and answer that warehouse buzzer as a church group has arrived and Richard unloads the food that they have so generously collected at their church. It's 3:30pm and the volunteer nurses have arrived to set up the clinic so it will be ready for our doctors. I look up and hear buenos tardes from our volunteer interpreter who is here to translate for the intake volunteers and the doctors in the clinic for our Hispanic families who come in this evening. We are out of antibiotics so we rejoice when we see the Drugs Reps. arrive with a bag full of free samples. The young people from Lincoln University arrive to help us carry out groceries for families and work in the warehouse. Many volunteers come when they get off work to fill the shoes of those that were here in the morning.

One Thursday a year we gather our families to thank God for our blessings. Every Thursday the needy of our community thank you for all your generosity. Have a great Turkey Day!

GOOD BYE ANNE!

Anne Carmichael has moved on from the Samaritan Center following a little more than three years of service. Anne has accepted a position with Vitae Caring Foundation in their fund raising department. We all wish Anne good luck as she moves on to accept this challenge, she will be missed here at the Samaritan Center.

ADOPTERS NEEDED STILL

Christmas adoption is moving right along. If you are interested in adopting a family this year then do not delay! We need to hear from you as soon as possible.

Visit our website at www.midmosamaritan.org and click on the Christmas link to find more information! You can also call the Samaritan Center at 573-634-7776.

November 15th is the cutoff date for adopters so don't delay, adopt today!

DATES TO REMEMBER

December

2 Samaritan Center Holiday Open House

16 Senior Holiday delivery

16-January 1 Christmas break CLOSED

January

2 Open for Services

16 MLK Day CLOSED

Samaritan Center • (573) 634-7776 • Fax (573) 761-5948 • samaritan@midmosamaritan.org
www.midmosamaritan.org

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Hours of Operation

Open to Public: 9:30am-11:30am Monday-Thursday
4:00pm-6:00pm Thursday

Medical Clinic: 4:00pm-6:00pm Thursday

Dental Clinic: by appointment Only,
call (573)761-3473 for information

Staff Office Hours: 8:00am-5:00pm Monday-Friday

