

Words of Mercy



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5th Annual Champions For Mercy Gala is October 18th

Mercy Support Services is hosting its fifth annual fundraising Gala on Thursday, October 18th, 2018 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Thrasher-Horne Conference Center in Orange Park, FL. The night will feature a dreamy, starlight theme, celebrating the many caring supporters of Mercy who are joining together collectively to “Light a Path to Self-Sufficiency” for others.

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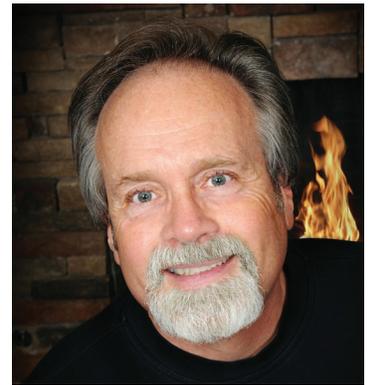
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The annual Gala is a signature fundraising event that attracts a sell-out crowd of Clay County residents, business owners, and community leaders who come together for an evening of dining, entertainment and appealing live auctions. All proceeds from the event directly benefit families and children in Clay County who are served by Mercy Support Services.

The event begins with a reception, a Cork Pull drawing and silent auction at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner and entertainment. The Keynote Speaker will be John Ashmen, President of Citygate Network. Van Royal is the Honorary Chair of the Gala and JoLynn Carter is the Event Coordinator.

Tickets are \$100 per person and seating is limited. Sponsorships and tickets may be purchased online at www.mercysupportservices.org/2018-champions-for-mercy-gala/. For more information contact Sophie at Sophie.dentiste@mercysupportservices.org or 904-701-7651.



Keynote Speaker - John Ashmen,
President of Citygate Network



Volunteer Spotlight: JoLynn Carter

“My passion has always been people - relationships, joining groups, getting to know people and helping others,” says JoLynn Carter. “As an Army brat and a Navy wife, I had to find ways to get to know people fast. Volunteering was the best way I knew how to do that.”

She has, in fact, volunteered on and off for over 20 years beginning in college at Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA. There, she volunteered for the Red Cross and was the marketing chair for the local chapter of NHRMA.

“On one of my husband’s tours, I was asked to be the marketing chair for a yearly military conference called the Joint Women’s Conference in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. I found that I had a gift for organizing and a love for putting on events, as well as creating marketing pieces for them,” she said.

The Carters moved to Florida in 2004, where JoLynn was hired as a sales assistant for Cox Radio, 96.9 The Eagle. While there, she launched an Art and Wine night to benefit the neonatal intensive care unit at a local hospital.

“My daughter was a premie, so that held a special place in my heart. I started to really love doing events and helping people in need. A good friend of mine, Joelle Marquis, called me one day to see if I could help last minute with putting together a gala for Quigley House. I said YES! I helped put together their gala for two years.”

A Word From Patrick



Patrick Hayle

Mercy is Lighting The Way

Our 5th Annual Champions for Mercy Gala is upon us. This year the theme is “Light the Path to Self-Sufficiency”. There are so many champions in our community that choose every single day to light a path, shining the light of Christ onto those who are less fortunate. Whether it is through our expanding programs, our care and financial coaching, or our amazing cadre of volunteers, we are so excited to take this opportunity to share all that has been accomplished since our last gathering.

Some of our clients will be sharing their testimony on how Mercy has impacted their lives, and the lives of their children. Through the many programs, including the special project, Recovering Clay, we are continuing to offer the residents who are in desperate need, a hand up, from people who believe in them and who are walking alongside them with guidance and assistance for a better life.

Our Keynote Speaker will be John Ashmen, the President and CEO of Citygate Network, formerly Association of Gospel Rescue Missions (AGRM), from Colorado Springs. I was privileged to serve on the AGRM Board with him for three years, while I worked at City Rescue Mission. He will bring an international perspective to the needs of hunger, homelessness, abuse and addiction, while proclaiming the passion of Jesus as these basic needs are met.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for joining us and partnering with us. Every donation, volunteer hour, promotional support and prayer of encouragement is a point of light and they all matter. Together we can make a brilliant impact - lighting a path to dignity and self-sufficiency for all in Clay County. May God Continually Bless You!

In Their Own Words: Overcoming Homelessness With Mercy

I had a good job, but then they got new management. They made some changes and a lot of us were laid off.

We gave back the house and decided we had to live in the car. It was old but the AC worked. We always enjoyed coming to OP and I knew the schools were better here, so that is how we ended up here.

We only kept enough belongings that could fit into the car. We slept at a rest stop and came to the OP library during the day to stay cool and look for a job. I finally found a job at a law firm, but we lived in the car for six months before I found Mercy and Ms. Dena. We were referred by Project Reach.

I still had some money from savings, and we could not bathe all week. Then on the weekends I would get a cheap room, for about \$30, praying there were no bedbugs and such, and we would shower and get cleaned up.

One of the most exciting things was our move-in day, when the fridge was full of food. We had no refrigerator, so we had to make the money stretch. When we saw the first apartment, we did not care what was in it. We were so excited to just have shelter. The apartment is fantastic, our church home was awesome and always there supporting us. First Presbyterian Church, we enjoyed everything! The food, the brownies! Just the little things made us feel so special. Thank you so much!

When I tell you that Mercy has changed our lives, I don't know where we would be. Finding Mercy gave me peace of mind as a mom. I could not focus on what was going on outside our car, and working, and keeping the kids safe.

Now I'm standing here strong because of Mercy. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. As soon as I am able, we want to pay it forward. We thank you so much.

— Keena

In Their Own Words: Self-Sufficiency Means Joy For Her Family



My Journey here in Florida began in March 2017. My boyfriend of four years had just retired from the military and decided it would be great to move here from Oklahoma, so we packed up the kids and did just that.

As soon as we arrived, we moved into a beautiful three bedroom home in Middleburg. Several months went by and everything was falling into place. At the end of the year, we talked about me going to work to help with expenses. What I had not known was that his income had been going to debts and other expenses I did not know about. With the shortage of money came the stress. By mid-November, the stress became too much and my boyfriend told me he was moving out the next day. Me and my five children had to find somewhere else to go.

"At that very moment, I felt a ray of hope."

Project Reach gave me the number for Mercy Support Services. I remember thinking "oh great, another phone number." But I called, and left a message. Within a couple of days, Dena Collins called me back and seemed very concerned about my situation. At that very moment, I felt a ray of hope.

In the following weeks, I began to look for work but the van died, leaving me without transportation. With no money to fix the van, I was beginning to lose faith. But Callie, my care coach, came over every week to make sure my faith wasn't going anywhere!

Two months into the program, Dena suggested I go to People Ready and apply for temporary work. I was able to find a ride and started my new job two days later.

A couple weeks after starting my job, the van was fixed with the help of United Methodist of Orange Park. Once I finally had reliable transportation and started receiving weekly checks, it was at that moment I knew God heard every cry, every prayer.

I cannot even begin to express how grateful I am for Mercy Support Services and the opportunity I was given to get my life back in order. I see nothing but great things happening for me and my family. The kids and I thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



Volunteer Spotlight: JoLynn Carter Continued from page 1

Fast forward to 2015 when Joelle introduced her to Patrick Hayle, CEO of Mercy Support Services. Once JoLynn found out what Mercy Support Services does and the need in our community, she knew that she wanted to help.

"At the time, Mercy needed someone to help with special events, mainly its yearly Gala. So long story short, this is my third year as the special events coordinator for Mercy Support Services. Mercy is comprised of so many caring, compassionate people that it makes volunteering for them a gift to me."

When she is not volunteering, JoLynn is the Marketing and Business Coordinator for the Thrasher-Horne Center. She is chairing the 5th Annual Champions for Mercy Gala on October 18.



Employee Spotlight: Faith Manuel-McKenney

Faith Manuel-McKenney is the youngest member of the Mercy family and works as a Care Agent in the call center. She recently married the love of her life and has a handsome three year old son. Faith is currently in school studying to become an American Sign Language Interpreter. She founded a ministry called Esther Moment Ministries to support young mothers in need. She says that this Ministry is to help young mothers to know that getting pregnant at a young age isn't the moment their life ends, but that it is the moment that their life begins. "You were created for such a time as this, your Esther Moment," she says.

Give Mercy Day is November 27

Giving Tuesday is celebrated on the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving and the day following "Cyber Monday." It was established as a day of philanthropy in the midst of holiday buying. Everyone is encourage to remember those who are less fortunate during the time when we our counting our blessings and purchasing gifts. Once again, we are celebrating Give Mercy Day as a way for our supporters to share their blessings with Clay County neighbors in need. On our website and on Facebook, you can #GiveMercy and share your reasons for giving. Just add #MyGivingStory or send an Email with your thoughts to info@MercySupportServices.org.

NEEDS LIST

- Twin Sheet Sets
- Full sheet sets
- Twin comforters
- Bath towels
- Laundry detergent
- Dryer sheets
- Christian books and movies

Save the Date!

Mark your calendar for the second Champions For Mercy Golf Tournament on Friday, May 10, 2019 at the Eagle Harbor Golf Club. We had a wonderful event in April for our first tournament, and you won't want to miss the next one.

Shop & Support Mercy With Amazon

You can purchase an item from our Amazon Wish List and it will be delivered directly to Mercy. The list includes everything we need to support Clay County families in crisis, from furnishings for our supportive housing units to books and toys for the children. You can shop our Wish List at <https://amzn.to/2NKH8Zd>

You can also support Mercy every time you shop at Amazon.com by designating a portion of your purchase to be donated to us through Amazon Smile. Just log on to your Amazon account and search for Amazon Smile, or type <https://amzn.to/2NLigel> and start shopping!



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MISSION STATEMENT

Mercy Support Services serves the people of Clay County who are circumstantially in need by providing services that guide them to self-sufficiency through a network of compassionate-hearted people and organizations.