



Champions for Mercy Donor Appreciation Breakfast

On a beautiful Thursday morning in February, over 60 donors attended our Annual Champions for Mercy Donor Appreciation Breakfast. We would like to give a huge thank you to Dr. Lever, Robyn Voigt, and the staff and volunteers of Orange Park United Methodist Church for hosting and supplying the wonderful venue and food for our event. The Mercy Award for Business Partnership went to DUBO Roofing and the Mercy Award for Ministry Partnership went to Hibernia Baptist Church. Jim Horne was recognized for his role as Honorary Chair in this past year's Night of Hope Gala.

(continued on page 2)

Welcome!



I pray that this newsletter finds you in good health! Spring is here and with it, a renewed HOPE for new life, new growth and the anticipation of all that God

will do in and through us in 2022. In February, we recognized our 2021 donors with our annual Champions for Mercy Donor Appreciation Breakfast. Our invitation, as well as the event, was decorated with sweet African violets that has great symbolism for our gratitude of your support. While most indoor plants flourish only two to five years, the African Violet flower has serious staying power. With the right care, they can live up to 50 years! They're a Symbol of **Devotion** - a promise to provide a bit of joy in all seasons. Whatever the reasons, the simple African Violet symbolizes **devotion, commitment, and faithfulness**. It is the gift that keeps on growing! And we felt it was the perfect symbol for this year's breakfast to show appreciation to our devoted donors and partners. We have seen this commitment in our board and staff throughout the past two years of challenges. We have seen this readiness with our volunteers and partners who continually show up to community outreaches and then ask us for more opportunities than we can currently provide. We have seen it in the community leaders who remain consistent in their commitment to BE the rising tide for Clay County and support our suffering neighbors.

(continued on page 3)

SAVE THE DATE!

The 5th annual Jack Myers Champions for Mercy Golf Tournament will be held on May 6th, 2022 at Eagle Landing Golf Club.

Tee it up on your calendars! You don't want to miss it!

8:30 AM First Flight
1:30 PM Second Flight





Champions for Mercy Donor Appreciation Breakfast

(continued from page 1)

The Champions for Mercy Donor Appreciation Breakfast honors all Guardian Partners (recurring giving partners) and Champion Donors and up who supported Mercy in the past year with the many programs and services that make such an impact in the lives of those in need in Clay County. For more information on this event and how you can join us for the next one, contact Jcarter@mercysupportservices.org.



We Love Our Interns!



Pamela F. Bowman, a native of South Carolina, was commissioned through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (R.O.T.C.) at South Carolina State University. After her commission, she served in the U.S. Army and retired with over 28 years as a Senior Military Human Resource Manager. Currently, Pamela is enrolled at Lancaster Bible College, Capital Seminary & Graduate School and pursuing a Master of Arts degree in Christian Care Ministry.

Pamela is working on her student practicum and serves as an intern here at Mercy. Each week, she is gaining valuable volunteer hours, fulfilling critical caregiving, and coaching practices that are relevant to her career path while sharpening her Biblical skills. Here at Mercy, we interact with people who have a variety of issues and concerns, and we provide effective care to those who need it based on the ministry of Jesus. We are making an impact in this community, empowering lives, and changing futures.



Deena Pond came to Mercy to complete her observations hours required for her degree from Trinity Baptist College as a Christian Counselor. Deena writes, "I feel so fortunate that I had the opportunity to acquire those hours as an intern at Mercy Support Services. I learned so much from the team and Dr. Phyllis. I truly believe in what they stand for and what they are trying to accomplish in Clay County. Their compassion and dedication to the community inspires me and is one of the reasons I still volunteer for their events and outreaches. "

A Word From Patrick (continued from page 1)

And we do not see it slowing down anytime soon. The needs are great and as Mercy grows with the new Mercy Village, we know we will still be working to meet the growing needs in our County. So, we thank you for the role that you play in showing MERCY in Clay, and we ask you to pray about your own growth and opportunities to bloom this coming season.

May God bless you all!

Welcome, Teresa Scott



TO OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Teresa is President/CEO of Penney Retirement Community, a Christian continuing care retirement community (CCRC) in Clay County home to more than 500 seniors over the age of 55. Teresa has 35 years of experience in health care. She received her undergraduate degree from Concord College in Athens, West Virginia, and served three years in the U.S. Army before getting her master's degree in social work from Florida State University. Teresa became the first female president at Penney Retirement Community in 2014. She is active with many business organizations, including the Green Cove Springs Rotary, Clay County Chamber of Commerce, and LeadingAge Florida. In addition to being a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Teresa is a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator. She has committed her career to non-profit organizations, primarily serving seniors, advocating for the highest quality of care.



A Testimony of Empowerment

“Before my journey with Mercy began, uncertainty, fear, doubt and anxiety consumed me. With so little knowledge of important life skills, navigating life as a single mother felt close to impossible.

From the very first day I met the team of people that would be helping me at Mercy, I felt welcomed, understood and valued. They care so deeply about what they do and it shows. I'd like to preface by saying this: If you commit wholeheartedly to the services they provide, your life WILL change in the best ways possible.

The financial housing assistance gave me the opportunity to be independent for the first time in my life, which in and of itself was so empowering and really gave me hope for my future. Participating in the financial coaching was very informative and is approached in a way that is not overwhelming, and is easy to understand. Committing to and applying the knowledge and suggestions provided by my financial coach gave me the ability to prepare for expected and unexpected expenses. Learning to truly understand my finances and budgeting significantly increased my confidence in myself and my ability to provide for my family and I no longer am afraid of my expenses.

The therapy I received completely transformed my perception of myself, and life. Learning to have a deep understanding of who I am and what my specific needs are has brought me a sense of inner peace and overall enjoyment of life. Truly a priceless gift. Through therapy I was also guided in my journey with God in a way that felt natural and genuine. Opening my heart and learning the true love of God has filled me with a deep sense of belonging and purpose. I sincerely believe that it was God's plan to direct me to Mercy Support Services, for the answers that I prayed for so long began to be revealed throughout the process of the services provided.

To say I am grateful would be an extreme understatement. My life has changed in such powerful ways in such a short period. Mercy Support Services empowered me. My confidence, understanding of myself, and my faith, has guided me to the path I belong on. Thank you to everyone at Mercy, from the bottom of my heart.”

- Ashlie V.

Upcoming Events

Mercy at the Clay County Fair – Senior Day —April 6

Mercy Board, Staff and Volunteers will be working the gate until 6 pm.
Senior Citizens get in free!

5th Annual Jack Myers Champions for Mercy Golf Tournament – May 6

Eagle Landing Golf Club

Heart for Mercy Kickoff Ice Cream Social—July

Night of Hope Gala—October 20

St. Catherine’s Catholic Church

College Drive Initiative

In November 2020, the College Drive Initiative was born out of seeing the great synergy taking place on College Drive. With the many non-profits beginning to anchor in this area and the ongoing need to enjoy a full evening around the ever-popular Thrasher-Horne Center, it was felt there was a unique opportunity to be proactive by gathering the thoughts of the College Drive community and begin initiating something that benefits its local citizens and Clay County at large. Throughout the following year (2021), Deliberative Forums devised through the Kettering Foundation took place. Over 150 Clay County citizens, nonprofit organizations, Clay County staff, St. John’s River State College, Thrasher-Horne Cultural Arts Center, and local business owners worked together to envision the future of College Drive. Monthly steering group meetings, a segment of the Clay County Safety Net Alliance monthly meeting, and seven deliberative forums in August and October resulted in several emerging outcomes.

Destination. College Drive has the potential to become a destination not only for higher education and providing for peoples’ critical needs, but a place where residents and visitors come to socialize with family and friends and enjoy entertainment and eating establishments. More than a thoroughfare, people envision College Drive as a nucleus of community life in north-central Clay County.

Public Education. Educating residents and county citizens about the wealth of human services and educational resources on College Drive is an important first step for community leaders and stakeholders to create a brand identity for College Drive.

Safety and Aesthetics. Deliberators strongly believe the road requires intersection improvements, low-maintenance landscaping, and safe pedestrian and bike lanes. Many felt a master plan, overlay district, or design plan of some kind would help guide future College Drive improvements.

Community Events. Gathering community on a regular basis to enjoy Food Truck events and other festivities.

In December 2021, the Clay County Board of County Commissioners fully embraced the College Drive Initiative and the deliberative process has now moved into an implementation phase. It is an exciting time to be a part of something that will benefit so many citizens and we invite you to join us on this journey. Please write us if you are interested in joining our team at collegedriveinitiative@gmail.com or follow us on Facebook for all the upcoming great events you can attend.



Welcome Back, Mike Serig

We welcome Michael Serig back to our Board of Directors after a one-year hiatus. Mike has been a foundational member of Mercy, having served on the original Steering Committee. He was director of the very first Governing Board. Mike served as Board Chair from 2016 through 2019 and brought us through some of our most volatile times.

Mike is the Founder/President of Earthscapes Design Build, LLC, a hardscaping design company here in Clay County. His innovative company takes granite material, which would otherwise be discarded as waste, and repurposes it into high-quality pavers used to beautify homes and yards. Earthscapes also provides customized landscaping design service using natural stone products and other materials.

Mike loves the Lord and allows himself to be guided by Him. He attends the Church of Eleven22 and lives in Fleming Island with his wife Shelby, an Attorney at Law, and their two teenage daughters.



Capital Campaign Plans for 2022!

It is again my pleasure to give the Mercy community an update on the progress on Mercy Village. In our last newsletter I discussed how the staff and board came together to refine the mission and use for Mercy Village – to help our clients get to a level of self-sufficiency. We have decided that the best use of Mercy Village will be to utilize the *entire* Village for our program clients. The original self-sufficiency program was designed to be completed in 90-120 days. Now into our 12th year of helping to get our clients to COMPLETE self-sufficiency, we have recognized that many, if not most, need more time to get back on their feet. The program will be organized in “tiers”. Tier 1 will be the entry level for clients as it is now. As clients progress with the life skills they need to get to total self-sufficiency – employment, financial stability, transportation, spiritual health – they will move up the ladder until they reach Tier 4. At that level they will be able to move into their own house or apartment. We hope that we will be able to develop a partnership with Clay Habitat as an additional opportunity for housing Tier 4 graduates. All the while each tier will be able to provide peer mentoring to those entering Mercy.

As an additional benefit of having the entire Village available, we will have the opportunity to provide additional help for the unaccompanied high school students after they graduate if they decide to attend St. Johns River College, a local vocational school or seek employment. Again, we are learning that the success of the student self-sufficiency program depends on teaching the life skills necessary for success and that cannot always be accomplished before they graduate from high school.

To date we have received just short of \$2 million in donations and commitments. My prayers are that by the time the next newsletter goes to print, I will be able to announce that we have secured a major level donor.

- 1 @ 2,400,000
- 1 @ 1,200,000
- 2 @ 600,000
- 3 @ 300,000
- 3 @ 180,000
- 10 @ 120,000
- 12 @ 90,000
- 15 @ 60,000
- 20 @ 30,000
- 30 @ 18,000
- 40 @ 12,000
- 50 @ 6,000
- many gifts



Please continue to pray with us that God will touch the hearts of other individuals, businesses, and foundations to make our vision a reality.



Dr. Robert Cowie
Chair, Board of Directors
Mercy Support Services

Champions for Mercy Golf Tournament (Continued from page 1)

Register NOW for the 5th Annual Jack Myers Champions for Mercy Golf Tournament! AM slots are filling up fast!

This event will be held at Eagle Landing Golf Club in Orange Park on Friday, May 6, 2022.

There will be a two Flight Schedule: 8:30 AM – Breakfast and Lunch Provided (Registration 7 AM) and 1:30 PM – Lunch and Dinner Provided (Registration 12 PM).

Each golf registration includes: Cart and Green Fees, 2 Meals (1st Flight Breakfast and Lunch), (2nd Flight Lunch and Dinner), Range Balls, Silent Auction, Proximity Contests, Special Event Gift, Goody Bag, and Door Prizes. Proceeds from the tournament will directly benefit families and children in Clay County. Your sponsorship and participation will help us greatly to continue our critical programs, helping individuals and families who are circumstantially in need.




FREE HEALTH INSURANCE QUOTES
Get Health Insurance for the Whole Family.

Nelson and Associates Insurance
will be at our office every 3rd Tuesday of the month from **10 A.M. TO 2 P.M.**

Call ahead to schedule an appointment for a **FREE** Quote on Affordable Health Insurance:
904-326-3288

Address: 515 College Dr, Middleburg, FL 32068

Nelson and Associates has set up shop at Mercy! The 3rd Tuesday of every month a representative from their office will be in house to provide free health insurance quotes. These plans are income based and personalized to fit your needs. If you or someone you know could benefit, call ahead to schedule an appointment today!



Our mailing address change:

**PO BOX 65160
Orange Park, FL 32065**

Please send all correspondence to this address. This is a new post office box.

Thank you!!



MERCY PARTNERS IN OUTREACH

What an exciting year it has been so far! In February, we participated in Fleming Island United Methodist’s Winter Festival. In March, we were blessed by the Church of Eleven22 with a Youth Serve Day here at the office! We joined the Keystone SafetyNet Alliance at the Hammer and Hope event and we hosted another wonderful outreach with Saved2Serve, Seeds of Love, and Clay County Rescue Mission. We are truly blessed here in Clay County with the most loving and selfless people! To the numerous vendors, organizations, ministries, and volunteers who came together for all of these community events, thank you! We look forward to serving alongside you for the next one!



CONNECT WITH US!

-  Mercysupportservices.org
-  Facebook.com/mercysupport
-  Instagram.com/mercysupportservices
-  Linkedin.com/company/mercysupportservices

P.O. Box 65160, Orange Park, FL 32065 (904) 297-4052